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JOHN DE WITT

GRAND PENSIONARY OF HOLLAND

OR

TWENTY YEARS OF A PARLIAMENTARY REPUBLIC

BY

M. ANTONIN LEFÈVRE PONTALIS

TRANSLATED BY S. E. AND A. STEPHENSON

IN TWO VOLUMES

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The Republic of the United Provinces seemed now free to enjoy with legitimate pride the prosperity insured to her by the re-establishment of peace abroad, and the pacification of civil discords, those two great benefits of the policy which

John de Witt had pursued with such far-sighted perseverance. After defending her maritime independence against England, she had secured her territorial independence by opposing the Triple Alliance to those projects of annexation of the Netherlands which would have made the King of France a formidable neighbour. She thought to have found sufficient protection against his threatened anger, in the support of the powers interested in preventing the aggrandisement of his kingdom, and hoped moreover that she had effected a reconciliation with Louis XIV. not only by insuring him the tranquil possession of that part of the Netherlands which she had induced Spain to give up to him, but also by leaving him the hope of a future understanding in the event of the succession to the Spanish monarchy becoming open.

At home, the preservation of the republican form of government appeared secured by the Perpetual Edict, which by abolishing the stadtholdership in the province of Holland, and leaving only military offices open to the Prince of Orange, prevented him from making himself master of the supreme power. The States of Holland, who had become in some sort the heirs of the stadtholders, exercised in apparent security a political supremacy which shed lustre on the whole confederation. They could now enjoy their well-earned ease. 'The deputies of the States,' writes a contemporary, 'have so little business to transact that the day before yesterday, none being submitted to their deliberation, they entered and quitted the Assembly almost at the same moment, a thing which has not happened for more than twenty years.'

The greatest States might have envied the happy fate of the republic. She had provided for all the expenses of war and peace, and had never failed to find money. Whilst unfalteringly supporting the burden of three naval campaigns against England, she found means for constructing at the Hague a cannon foundry, which remains to this day. At the same time the long avenue was being completed which leads from the Hague to the port of Scheveningen, the inauguration of which was celebrated in the elegant lines of Huyghens, formerly private secretary to the Stadtholder William II.

As soon as they were relieved from the burden of the extraordinary expenses imposed upon them by the war with England, and by the armaments for the defence of the Netherlands, the States of Holland undertook the task of again putting their finances into good order. This was endangered by the loans which had deprived them of the advantage of the last reduction of interest, and which in fourteen years had risen to 17,000,000 florins. They contented themselves for the moment by paying off 1,000,000 florins, and did not venture upon the more effectual measures for lightening the debt advised by the Grand Pensionary. Fearing to displease the bondholders, they refused to allow a second reduction of interest from $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 per cent., which would have enabled them to re-establish the sinking fund. They showed themselves equally averse from the proposal of a loan of 1,200,000 florins, to be applied to this purpose, and which would also have served to form a reserve fund. They preferred to attend to the suggestions of an exaggerated economy and to reduce the public expenditure, more particularly that of the army; and were in haste to benefit the taxpayers by relieving them from the most onerous imposts, such as the tolls levied on travellers by land or water, and reducing by one-half the tax upon capital.

They succeeded thus in giving a new impetus to commerce. The shares of the East India Company, which had risen between 1656 and 1663 from three hundred and eighty to four hundred and seventy florins, rose still further and returned interest at 50 to 54 per cent. The merchant vessels of Holland covered the ocean. The population continually increased; the principal towns were obliged to enlarge their boundaries, and new houses were rising in such numbers that at Amsterdam the duties upon building materials were farmed out at 15,000 florins above the usual amount. The progress of agriculture was no less satisfactory. The production of wheat had been so largely increased that one village near Haarlem paid as much as 80,000 crowns in duties upon grinding. Comfort and prosperity rewarded the inhabitants for

the sacrifices they had made for the independence and greatness of their country. Such were the good effects of a beneficent government, which under the noble guidance of the Grand Pensionary de Witt had brought the United Provinces through the trials of a foreign war with the lustre of victory; had procured for them by its treaties the most brilliant diplomatic successes, and seemed at the same time to have completed the work of internal pacification. There appeared to be no danger to be avoided henceforth but that of the abuse of riches; and the former republic of the 'beggars' had nothing to fear but the risk of too great prosperity.

She was represented abroad with royal magnificence. The ordinary residents, it is true, only received 3,000 florins, but the salaries of the principal ambassadors, particularly the ambassador to France, rose to 12,500 florins. The regulations concerning the expenses of ministers sent on extraordinary missions allowed them in addition 400 florins for their journey; 40 florins a day for their table if there were two, and 47 if there were three; 6 florins for lodging; and 11 florins for horses and carriages. An allowance was also made for their suite, which comprised a chaplain, who was paid 50 florins a month; a secretary and steward, who received 200 florins for the journey; and four footmen, whose wages were 20 florins a month each. Count d'Estrades, the ambassador of Louis XIV., writes accordingly, 'that he wishes he were treated as the States treat their ambassadors extraordinary: giving them a steward who makes all purchases and defrays all expenses at the cost of the State, and granting them each on their return a present of 6,000 florins; while his own embassy—the salary of which is only 12,000 florins per annum, with all expenses to be paid—has already cost him in four years 100,000 crowns of his own money.' The envoys of the States-General were thus envied even by the representatives of the King of France.

On the most distant shores, as well as in their immediate neighbourhood, the United Provinces made their power respected. The condition of their colonies became more and more prosperous. The East India Company, whose president, John Maatsuyker of Amsterdam, remained five-and-twenty

years in office, maintained 160 vessels, and, notwithstanding the division of profits among the shareholders, had a reserve fund of 10,000,000 florins. It had extended its transactions as far as Japan, had discovered a gold mine in the island of Sumatra, and had acquired the sovereignty over the whole of Ceylon. It had besides avenged the murder of some subjects of the United Provinces who had been killed by the King of Macassar, and imposed upon him a treaty by the terms of which he had to pay to the Company a thousand slaves or their value in gold annually, to reserve the trade of the island to the Dutch to the exclusion of every other nation, and to cede all that portion of his dominions which had been conquered. The neighbouring kings, alarmed, hastened to accept conditions of peace which placed them in subjection to the republic, whose rule extended thus to the Molucca Islands—4,000 leagues from the mother country.

Interested in protecting their commerce in European waters as well as in the East, the States-General had sent to Constantinople the former secretary of embassy, Croock, who died on his way out, a victim to the earthquake of Ragusa in 1667. They replaced him by Justin Colyer, a lawyer whose diplomatic abilities left much to be desired, and who represented them at the court of the Sultan Mahomet IV. ' without doing them any great honour by his behaviour or by his despatches.' The Sultan received him in state, treated him like the ambassadors of crowned heads, and acceded to his demands by guaranteeing the free navigation of the Mediterranean to the Dutch vessels constantly threatened by the corsairs of Algiers and Tunis.

The States-General in consequence remained deaf to the despairing appeal of the republic of Venice, which vainly implored the aid of Christendom to save Candia, besieged by the Turks. The Venetians had sent the secretary of the republic, Marchesini, to obtain the assistance of the States. The Grand Pensionary, alarmed for the fate of this island, which protected the whole Archipelago and even Italy against the progress of the Ottoman power, proposed the despatch of a reinforcement of 2,000 men and invited the co-operation of England. But

the hesitation of England and the opposition of Amsterdam prevented the carrying out of his proposal. Candia, left to its fate, fell after an heroic resistance, and the alliance of the United Provinces with Turkey remained unimpaired. The States-General hoped to profit by it to dissuade the Sultan from a fresh war with the German Empire, now threatened with a Turkish invasion, and thus to help to preserve the peace of Europe, of which they considered themselves the guardians.

In every court and every capital their diplomacy was at work, and, excepting in rare instances, was marked with success. With Portugal, through their envoy Barlæus, they settled the colonial disputes to which the neighbourhood of the Portuguese possessions in the Indian Ocean had given rise, and the negotiations concerning which had been vainly prolonged during seven years. The arbitration offered to Temple, in his private capacity, secured the conclusion of a treaty by which the East India Company kept the conquests it had made on the coast of Malabar, until the Portuguese Government should have reimbursed to it the sum of 2,500,000 of cruzados which they acknowledged as a debt.

It was of still more importance to the States-General to maintain relations with the northern courts, both to appease any disputes which might lead to fresh wars, and to draw closer the bonds of old friendships. Though forced for the moment to affect to take no notice of the affront they had received from the Czar Alexis, who had grossly ill-treated their resident in Sweden, Heinsius, when sent to Moscow on an extraordinary mission, they made advances towards the new King of Poland, Michael Wiesnowiecki. The prudent neutrality which they had maintained towards his competitors for the throne, the Duke de Neuburg and the Prince de Condé, permitted them to send him an ambassador with their congratulations. After vainly offering the post to the two burgomasters of Amsterdam, they made choice of John de Wit, councillor of Dordrecht and cousin of the Grand Pensionary. The latter, who had been annoyed by the intolerance of his cousin's republican opinions, was glad to send him to a distance, but had no reason to congratulate himself on having placed in his

hands negotiations in the conduct of which the envoy of the United Provinces did not make proof of all the discretion needed, and more than once incurred the censure of the Grand Pensionary. The King of Poland, flattered by the advances made to him by the ambassador, received him with confidence. He expressed to him the anxiety he felt at the projects of the King of France, and his desire to resist him. The States, in order to give Louis no ground for complaint, caused the despatch to be burnt in which they were informed of this declaration.

The good understanding with the court of Copenhagen was still more useful to the United Provinces, and they took care to prevent its being endangered. The inveterate hatred between Denmark and Sweden—in consequence of which, writes Lionne, 'their hounds would never hunt together'—was such that the States-General, by joining with Sweden in the Triple Alliance, had inevitably alienated Denmark. They had no confidence in the arbitration of the King of France, to whom King Frederic III. had submitted the pecuniary differences which had not been regulated by the last treaty of alliance concluded between Denmark and the United Provinces. They wished therefore to induce the new King, Christian VI., to come to a direct understanding with them. To attach him to their cause, not content with the services of Lemaire, their ordinary resident in Denmark, they commissioned their envoy to Poland, De Wit, to go first to Copenhagen to congratulate the new King on his accession to the throne. They hoped thus to succeed in bringing to a favourable termination the negotiations concerning the arbitration. 'It appears very probable,' writes Bernard, the French agent at the Hague in the following year, 'that Denmark will henceforth unite herself more closely with this republic.'

These various negotiations were but a secondary work of the diplomacy of the States-General. They thought themselves called upon by the Triple Alliance to take the lead in European politics, in order to preserve Europe from the danger of a conflict between France and Spain. Accordingly, to avert the renewal of the war constantly threatened between the two

great rival monarchies, they proposed to include other states in the league which they had concluded with England and Sweden. They desired also that it should be made to guarantee the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle concluded between the two belligerent powers; and flattered themselves that this object once attained they would have nothing more to fear for their own security. Anxious then to complete the great work for whose success he had never ceased to labour, the Grand Pensionary of Holland was careful to secure full diplomatic powers to the commissioners who had negotiated the Triple Alliance, and who faithfully carried out his instructions.

The States-General thought with justice that they might count upon the Swiss Cantons. They hoped, writes De Witt, to find their advantage in the close union of two republics founded on the same principles and allied by the same interests. It is true that the Swiss Cantons had remained in alliance with the King of France, by whom they were subsidised. But their relations had become somewhat strained of late years in consequence of the strictness which Colbert had shown in regulating their pecuniary allowances. The commissioners of the States-General sought to gain some advantage from this dissatisfaction, and welcomed as an advance the mission to the Hague with which a gentleman from the Canton of Berne, François de Bonsteten, had just been charged. He was instructed to come to an agreement with the States of Holland as to the levying of some Swiss troops, of which he would have liked to obtain the command. The States of Holland offered to take into their pay three or four companies of eighty men each, on condition that the Cantons should give them 3,000 men if they were in need of them. They were encouraged in this idea by De Witt, who wished to insure to the republic in case of war a body of picked soldiers, and also to provide the States without delay with a force which by its foreign origin would be independent of the Prince of Orange, should the son of William II. be one day raised to the rank of captain-general. The wish of the Cantons to retain the right of recalling their troops kept these arrangements in suspense. The States-General, however, profited by them to urge

the conclusion of a diplomatic agreement by which the Cantons should be admitted to the Triple Alliance. Thinking themselves secure of the Protestant Cantons, they applied through the court of Spain to the Catholic Cantons, but could not prevent their negotiations being held in check by the skilful measures of the King of France.

From Germany the States-General could hardly expect to receive any efficient support. The empire, divided and dismembered by the treaty of Westphalia, was, according to the opinion expressed by the Grand Pensionary, nothing but 'a skeleton, of which the different parts were attached not by sinews but by wires, and which had no power of voluntary movement.' The States-General had accordingly until now neglected to seek the alliance of the German princes. They could not indeed have secured it except by consenting to satisfy their pecuniary demands, which they did not feel themselves called upon to do. Believing that the United Provinces were in no danger, and that they had therefore only the Spanish Netherlands to protect, the States-General considered that the German princes were so much interested in preventing their conquest by France that they would be compelled to defend them without any necessity of paying for their assistance. They contented themselves with settling the local disputes between the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Brandenburg, and kept up friendly relations with the Princes of Brunswick-Luneburg, having through John de Witt insured the favourable disposition of their principal ministers and envoys: Count Waldeck, Müller, Secretary Knopff, and Wicquefort—who was one of the confidants of the Grand Pensionary. There was no need for them to make any advances to the Archbishop-Elector of Mayence, who, having been a most devoted adherent of French policy, was ready now to give the signal for resistance, and was foremost in proposing a defensive league with the United Provinces. De Witt received his offers favourably, but without departing from the strictest reserve, for fear of rashly provoking the King of France.

In order to obtain the co-operation of the German princes more easily and more surely, the States-General were negotiating

at Vienna in the hope of bringing the Emperor into the Triple Alliance. They had no suspicion of the secret treaty that he had concluded with France and by which the division of the Spanish monarchy was settled, Louis XIV. having taken care to keep it concealed. They hoped to obtain success for their efforts by acting in concert with the court of Madrid, to whose advice and reproofs it seemed impossible that the Emperor should be indifferent. At the same time they resolved to send Prince John Maurice of Nassau as ambassador extraordinary to Vienna. But reassured by the preliminaries of peace between France and Spain, they gave up this idea on account of the expense of such an embassy, which seemed now needless. They contented themselves with being represented by a deputy of their assembly who could not carry the same weight: Hamel Bruyninex, their former agent at Cologne and Frankfort, and councillor and sheriff of Bois-le-Duc. His mission was entirely unsupported. The States-General had not secured themselves any champion of their interests at the court of Leopold I., and it was not with the Emperor in person that their envoy could negotiate to any purpose. Destined from infancy for the priesthood, before the death of his elder brother made him heir to the imperial crown, Leopold I. after he came to the throne still retained more taste for devotion and pious exercises than for the duties of a sovereign. 'He is not like your master, who acts in everything for himself,' said one of his ministers in confidence to the French ambassador, 'he is more like an image which you can carry about at pleasure, and set up as you like.' Feeble and vacillating, silent and a lover of solitude, he distrusted himself. Instead of ruling he preferred to be ruled, and was long before he assumed to himself the exercise of imperial power. His political incapacity did not, however, imperil the interests of Germany during a long reign of forty years, which yet was not spared the trials of wars and invasions.

His early youth had been guided by his mother, the Dowager-Empress Eleanor, Princess of Gonzaga, and he had since fallen under the dominion of the ambassador of Louis XIV., Nicholas Bretel, Chevalier de Gremonville, who had acquired

the greatest ascendency over him, and who flattered himself 'that he had only to open his mouth to obtain anything that he wanted.' Well versed in palace intrigues, and understanding how to work the springs of the most astute policy, the Chevalier de Gremonville had rendered eminent services to the King of France in the last four years. He had distinguished himself in the embassy confided to him, both by his intellectual gifts and by his personal qualities; and his despatches, which do him honour as a writer, place him in the front rank of the diplomatists of his day. Having already represented France at the court of the Emperor Ferdinand III. he held in his hands the clue to all the negotiations entrusted to him. On his return to Vienna he found himself anew on a stage suitable for the performance of a great part in diplomacy. For nine years he filled it brilliantly, baffling, with indefatigable dexterity, all the intrigues by which he was opposed.

He found a worthy adversary in Baron Lisola, the Spanish envoy to London, who had constituted himself the most active adviser of a coalition against France. Lisola had received authority to visit the Hague, where he obtained the assistance of the new imperial resident, Crampriget, 'whose accommodating temper made him particularly acceptable to the States.' In conjunction with him, Lisola had lost no time in coming to an agreement with the Grand Pensionary, whilst the Emperor's ministers were assuring the Chevalier de Gremonville that his powers had been so limited 'that he was bound hand and foot.' Notwithstanding the hesitations of the Emperor, and the opposition and jealousy of his councillors, 'this Mercury,' as Louis XIV. called him, 'made such good use of his quicksilver' that he changed the dispositions of the court of Vienna. Unknown to the French ambassador, Leopold pledged himself in writing to the Queen-Regent of Spain 'to defend the Netherlands if they were attacked;' even declaring himself willing 'to become a member of the Triple Alliance to make it more secure.' It was not until the following year that Gremonville succeeded in discovering this promise.

The disgrace of the Prime Minister, Prince Auersperg, was

another palpable check to the French policy. Jealous of his influence, his rival Prince Lobkowitz had induced the Spanish Government to accuse him of maintaining a correspondence with France; and the Emperor had been obliged to dismiss him from his council, as the Queen-Regent of Spain declared 'that she should refuse to hold any communication with him.' The Grand Pensionary took advantage of the removal of Prince Auersperg to urge the court of Vienna to put an end to its usual hesitation, and to make up its mind—not merely in favour of Spain, but also in favour of the signataries of the Triple Alliance. Leopold's uneasiness favoured the success of these negotiations. He was beginning to be alarmed at the ambitious projects attributed to Louis XIV., and had taken umbrage at a book printed at Paris with the title of 'Just Claims of the King of France upon the Empire.' 'Sweden having finally acceded to the Triple Alliance,' writes De Witt to the ambassador of the States-General in England, 'the time has come to include the Emperor in it, that he may bring with him all the German sovereigns.'

The States-General had encountered great difficulties before persuading Sweden definitively to confirm the treaty of the Triple Alliance, it having been only conditionally agreed to by the Swedish ambassador, Count Dohna. The condition to be fulfilled was the payment of the subsidies claimed by Sweden as the price of her interference in favour of the Netherlands. The States-General had no intention of undertaking this themselves. As their ambassador represented to the court of Sweden, 'they were bound to look closely after all expenditure, as their finances, which were only supplied by taxation, belonged to the public and not, as in a monarchy, to the sovereign.' To obtain agreement from Sweden to the convention of London which confirmed the treaty of the Triple Alliance, they had consented to guarantee to her, in conjunction with England, the sum of 480,000 crowns, but they insisted on the payment of this by Spain.

The Queen-Regent refused to promise this. The Governor of the Netherlands, to whom she had given full powers, constantly evaded the demands of the deputies of the States-

General who had been despatched to Brussels, and disheartened them by his determined ill-will. Vainly the Grand Pensionary appealed to Temple, who had removed to Brussels in order to employ his influence with the Governor. 'I beseech you,' he writes, 'to represent warmly to his Excellency that he will ruin the affairs of the King his master by his delays and irresolution; and that if he continues the same course they will be past all remedy in a few days. As his indifference seems as great in this matter as in all others, I refer myself to your judgment whether it would not be well that you should use some warmth in order to bring to a prompt conclusion an affair which must evidently be the spring to set the whole machine in motion.'

The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, by restoring at least a temporary security to the court of Madrid, made it forgetful of the dangers it had run, and which might again occur. Concessions seemed now superfluous, and, instead of considering the States-General as saviours, it pretended that they wished to victimise it, and complained of being reduced by their intervention to submit to a peace which imposed upon Spain heavy sacrifices by robbing her of a part of her possessions. Castilian pride again gave free course to its incorrigible illusions. 'Neither the urgent letters addressed by the King of England and their High Mightinesses to the Queen-Regent,' writes De Witt to the ambassador of the States of Stockholm, 'nor the requests and entreaties of the ministers of the two powers, have had yet any success.' Spain, as Sir William Temple mournfully declared, was like a sick man who had neither the will nor the power to help himself, and who must be saved in his own despite.

Thus driven to extremities, and urged forward by the pressing instances of Sweden, the States-General, in order to force Spain to give way, refused to take upon themselves the guarantee of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle so long as her debt was not discharged. Spain could not dispense with this guarantee without exposing herself to a rupture of the peace with France. The urgent intervention of Baron Lisola, the Emperor's minister at the Hague, whose support De Witt and

Temple had contrived to gain, triumphed at last over the irresolutions of the Spanish Government. In an interview with the ambassador of the States at Madrid, Baron Reede van Renswonde, the Spanish Prime Minister, Count Pegnaranda, gave a solemn promise in the name of the Queen-Regent that the subsidies should be paid. 'The States-General,' he assured him, 'may feel as secure as if they had the money in their hands, and to this I pledge my faith, my honour, and my reputation.'

It was time that such protracted perversity should come to an end. The Swedish alliance had nearly been destroyed by it. The threatened danger was, however, averted by the departure from Stockholm of the French ambassador, the Marquis de Pomponne, and the arrival of the ambassador from the United Provinces. Provoked at the defection of Sweden, Louis XIV. had thought the recall of Pomponne required by his dignity. In the preceding month, Peter de Groot had been received in state at Stockholm, and the choice of so skilful a diplomatist enabled the States to confirm their wavering influence with the Swedish Government. With singular perspicacity De Groot pointed out the means to be employed to induce Sweden to have patience with the delays and irresolutions of Spain. 'The advantage,' he writes, 'should not be neglected which may be obtained from a judicious distribution of some sums of money, particularly in a country where everything is very dear and people are in the habit of spending more than they have got; where nothing is done for nothing, and where everyone sets private before public interests.' 'It is,' he adds, 'the shortest, least expensive, and safest way, since 20,000 rix-dollars in presents will do more than 100,000 florins in subsidies.' The Chancellor and Prime Minister, Magnus de la Gardie, was himself so pressed for money that he obtained an assignment on the subsidies promised to Sweden of a sum of 20,000 rix-dollars due to him, and requested payment in advance. 'There would be everything to gain,' writes the ambassador on another occasion, 'in giving a great satisfaction to the Queen-Regent, by making her a present of a little pleasure yacht.' 'The more I consider this government,' he

adds, 'the more I am confirmed in my opinion that the most important affairs are regulated here not so much by the interest of the public as by that of the principal ministers; and that the surest and least costly method of obtaining success here is to gain the rulers, since what is given to the public obliges no one in particular, and wins glory but no gratitude.'

While he thus urged, though vainly, upon the States to take advantage of the venality of the Swedish Government, De Groot never ceased to represent the increasingly pressing necessity for the prompt payment of the subsidies by Spain. He declared that Sweden could not dispense with them, and would be quite capable, if need were, of procuring them elsewhere, at the risk of destroying the work of the Triple Alliance. 'France,' he writes, 'is not sleeping, and is throwing out a bait to preserve the good-will of those who remain attached to her.' He urgently recommended them to 'strike the iron whilst it was hot.'

As soon as Spain had made up her mind to subsidise Sweden in order to obtain her assistance for the Netherlands, De Groot attempted to reduce the demands of the Swedish Government, and induced them to consent to take bills of exchange for the payment of the entire sums promised by the Spanish Government. The agreement was helped forward by the intervention of a new negotiator, M. Silverkroon, who was despatched to the Hague to concert measures with Appelboom, the envoy of the court of Stockholm. By his agency, after a series of conferences, Sweden was induced to content herself with 200,000 crowns down, and the remaining 280,000 were divided into two payments at intervals of eight months. In consideration of the promise to pay, given by the Queen-Regent of Spain, the act of guarantee of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed May 7, 1669, in the names of the King of England, of the King of Sweden, and of the States-General. Before being exchanged between the contracting parties, the two reciprocal engagements were to remain in the hands of Sir William Temple until the payment of the final instalment of the subsidies. Every precaution seemed to have been taken to deprive Spain of any loophole for evasion, and the States-

General might justly congratulate themselves on the completion of their diplomatic successes by the happy termination of their negotiations with Sweden.

They were not prepared for the final demands of the court of Madrid. Notwithstanding her engagements, Spain now declared that she would postpone all payments until a fresh convention had been submitted to her; that, namely, in which the allies were to define the measures intended to secure the execution of the act of guarantee of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. The project had been for some months in preparation at the instigation of the Grand Pensionary, and had given occasion to prolonged debates. De Witt had found himself opposed, not only by the irresolution of England—now disposed to act and again to temporise—but also by the resistance of Sweden, who feared to engage herself too openly against France. He had, however, at last convinced the allies of the republic that a military convention was necessary to enforce the execution of the treaty, and once again had obtained their consent. But there still remained to be settled the allocation of the subsidies demanded by Sweden. As the price of a military contingent to be placed at the disposal of Spain in the event of a renewal of the war, Sweden demanded the promise of a second sum of 180,000 crowns to be paid quarterly, and required that the payment should be guaranteed in advance, half by England and half by the States-General. The refusal of England to enter into this engagement had prolonged the negotiation.

Spain could not fail to be informed of this mischance, and thought that she was paying too high a price in the subsidy of 480,000 crowns already granted for the guarantee of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, so long as the convention which was to be attached to it was not finally settled. Not holding herself bound by her promise to pay, to which she had attached no condition, she refused to keep it until she had obtained the fresh satisfaction she demanded in order to place her in perfect security. In justification of this the ambassador of the Queen-Regent at the Hague, Don Estevan de Gamarra, appealed to the instructions that he had received

from the Governor of the Netherlands, the incapable and obstinate Constable of Castille.

Such a proceeding, so contrary to all rules of common honesty, created great scandal. The States-General and the English Government made fresh and vehement remonstrances. At the Hague, the Grand Pensionary de Witt, being called upon to speak at a conference in the name of the allies, said such very unpleasant things to Don Estevan de Gamarra, that the Spanish ambassador was quite confounded and had not a word to say in reply. Arlington on his side commissioned Godolphin, the English minister at Brussels, to express his displeasure; while Temple did not spare Gamarra or the Constable of Castille the sharpest reproaches and the most serious warnings. Meanwhile the States-General gave pressing instructions to their deputies, Vrybergen and Van der Tocht, whom they sent to the Governor of the Netherlands at Brussels. Their threats and remonstrances were in vain. Gamarra seemed disposed to receive them favourably, but the Constable entirely ignored them. 'His reply,' writes De Witt, 'shows us the futility of our hopes.' The rupture of the negotiations seemed inevitable. The Swedish president, Maréchal, quitted the Hague, not choosing to submit to the indignity of treating with a government which could no longer inspire confidence.

De Witt, not allowing himself to be disheartened, made a last effort to avert this extremity. 'Though he was never,' he said, 'for plastering upon an ill wall,' he would not be turned aside from the object he wished to attain. He undertook to persuade England and Sweden that, however unjustifiable might be the refusal of the Spanish Government to keep its word, nothing had been asked of the allies but what they were prepared to do. He finally obtained from Sweden an engagement to furnish a military contingent, without exacting any pledge on the subject of the war subsidies, but with freedom to keep her troops at home in case of non-payment. The last difficulties were thus smoothed away. The Constable of Castille declared that as soon as he should receive the original act of the treaty of mutual assistance concluded between the

allies, he would arrange for the payment of the first instalment of the sums due to Sweden; and he announced that the money would be paid into the Bank of Amsterdam.

On this assurance the convention known as the Act of Triple Concert was concluded at the Hague. The States-General and the King of England pledged themselves, in the event of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle being broken, to send to sea forty line-of-battle ships each, to which was to be added a force of 6,000 foot and 2,000 horse, which latter might be replaced by a double number of infantry. The States were to furnish their contingent within a fortnight of its being called for, and the King of England as soon as possible. The King of Sweden promised on his side to set on foot, at the latest within three months from the commencement of hostilities, an army corps of 16,000 men; with the reservation that he should be dispensed from this obligation in case he did not receive the contingent war subsidies, fixed at 180,000 crowns quarterly. The diplomatic engagements were thus completed and sanctioned by military guarantees.

The Constable of Castille, having thus obtained everything that he had professed to wish, could not, however, give up his habit of evasion, and tried to excite disputes which the English ambassador Temple speaks of as groundless quarrels. De Witt met them with unanswerable arguments, and represented to him 'that they would only serve to disgust an allied monarch from whom such great advantages might be expected, and to leave uncompleted the work of peace, the design of which had been inspired by God for the universal good of Christendom.' The States-General having refused to take any notice of these quibbles, Gamarra thought himself at last authorised to pay into the hands of the Swedish ambassador the 200,000 crowns the refusal of which had nearly been the rock on which the negotiations were shipwrecked. He added to them the bond signed by Spain for the payment of the 280,000 crowns still due, receiving in exchange copies of the Act of Guarantee of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle and of the Act of Triple Concert, which completed the measures taken for the security of Spain.

A last formality insisted upon by the court of Madrid remained to be accomplished: that of the ratification of the Act of Guarantee by the governments which had signed it. England delayed compliance, and finally consented with an unwillingness which could not escape the observation of the Grand Pensionary. France almost succeeded in preventing the Swedish Government from following suit with the other allied powers, and so destroying the work of diplomacy at the moment when it reached completion. In the month of April, Count Kœnigsmark, the former ambassador of Sweden in France, who had now entered the service of Louis XIV., arrived in hot haste at the Hague to endeavour to prevent the Act of Ratification being delivered to the States. At the same time Pomponne, the ambassador of France to the United Provinces, transmitted to Stockholm through the French resident, Rousseau, the proposals by which the King of France flattered himself that he should obtain a sudden change of front in the diplomacy of the Swedish regency. Informed of this, Count Kœnigsmark spared neither threats nor promises to Appelboom, the Swedish ambassador at the Hague, to induce him to await the arrival of the next courier before parting with the Act of Ratification. Appelboom, after long resistance, finally gave way and only looked for some pretext to justify his refusal. But the Grand Pensionary, having received notice from the envoy of the States at Stockholm that the Swedish regency had despatched the Ratification to the Hague, would not allow Appelboom to detain it, and insisted upon its delivery without delay. The minister of Sweden was reduced to telling Count Kœnigsmark, who threatened him with the resentment of France, 'that if he were to be ruined, he preferred that it should be by obeying his orders rather than by disobeying them.'

The attempt made by the French Government at the last hour had failed. At the beginning of the month of May 1670, copies of the Act of Ratification, signed by the governments interested, were delivered to each negotiator; and the anxiety constantly caused to the States by the persistence of Spain in her unreasonable demands seemed happily dissipated. Such

was the result of the long and arduous labours of the Triple Alliance. More than two years of negotiations had been needed to bring it to completion. A shorter time sufficed to dissolve it.

The States had urged Spain to fulfil her engagements, not only in order to obtain the co-operation of Sweden, but also to guard themselves against another danger with which they were threatened: the withdrawal of the court of Madrid from the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle as the result of an agreement with Louis XIV. for the annexation of the Netherlands to France. The internal divisions which were finally undermining the strength of Spain, and completing the exhaustion of her resources, gave the States cause to fear that she might consent to yield.

In fact, while the ancient monarchy of Charles V. was submitting to be despoiled by Louis XIV. revolutions in the palace were hastening the completion of its downfall. The Queen-Regent, Maria Anne of Austria, had provoked the discontent of the court and the nation by giving her political confidence to her confessor, Father Nithard, a German Jesuit who had been appointed Inquisitor-General and invested with the powers of Prime Minister. Don Juan, the natural son of Philip IV., endowed with the most brilliant qualities, had rallied around him the national party, by offering himself as a defender to Spain, which had only escaped from the hands of an old man to fall into those of a child under the guardianship of a woman. He had been appointed Governor of the Netherlands in 1667, but had refused to absent himself from Spain, that he might be on the spot to take advantage of the vacancy of the throne which would be afforded by the expected death of the young king, Charles II. Threatened with arrest, he advanced upon Madrid at the head of an escort of 300 horse to insist upon the banishment of Father Nithard, and was welcomed along his road by the acclamations of the populace. The Queen-Regent was forced to yield, but induced Don Juan to content himself, instead of taking possession of the government, with the vice-royalty of Aragon, which left him master of half Spain. These dissensions could

not fail to dispose the court of Madrid to an understanding with the King of France, rather than to resistance. Accordingly it had not shown itself indifferent to the proposals made by Louis XIV. on the subject of the exchange of the Netherlands, and had even encouraged him in such a course by cautious advances.

Louis spared no pains to carry through this negotiation, which might result in the most glorious diplomatic success of his reign. He was tempted by the hope of acquiring peaceably and at once an increase of territory which would make France the true sovereign of Europe. Could he procure by means of a treaty the provinces possession of which would extend the northern frontier of his kingdom, he would disarm all opposition and secure to himself by inoffensive means, as he himself said, 'the acquisition most desirable to him in all the world.' It was true that the secret treaty which he had lately concluded with the Emperor of Germany with a view to the division of the Spanish monarchy on the death of Charles II. secured the Netherlands to him; but he foresaw that the opposition of the other States might place obstacles in the way of the execution of this convention; and he was beginning to fear that the Spaniards might be determined in case of a vacancy of the throne to have neither a German nor a French prince, but to make choice of Don Juan, in order that the kingdom might not be dismembered. It was greatly to his interest, therefore, that he should be placed in possession of the Netherlands during the lifetime of the young King. In this hope, he instructed his ambassador at Madrid, Monseigneur de Bousy, Archbishop of Toulouse, who had succeeded the Marquis de Villars, to offer the court of Madrid, in exchange for the Netherlands, Roussillon and French Cerdagne 'besides any sum of money which could induce them to accept this territorial compensation.' These proposals he at the same time caused to be most strongly urged at the court of Vienna.

It seemed to be to the interest of the Spanish Government to receive them favourably, for the Netherlands might be considered as the diseased limb which must be cut away from

the rest of the body. The French conquests by destroying the integrity of the Netherlands had made their possession so precarious, that it was henceforth not merely useless but burdensome to Spain. They had already cost her more than 4,000,000*l.* in the preceding reign. She maintained in the Low Countries at great cost an army which exhausted her finances, but was insufficient to repel a fresh invasion. By persisting in retaining these provinces Spain was provoking the rivalry of France; and, to secure them against the conquest she had reason to fear, it was necessary to place herself in dependence upon England and the States-General. She might, therefore, be tempted to yield them up, and by choosing as Governor of the Netherlands Don Inigo de Velasco, Constable of Castille, who took pleasure in parading the most frivolous incapacity, the Queen-Regent showed apparently little concern for their preservation. Besides, by ceding to Louis that part of the provinces which the King of France had overrun, and which might have been preserved by the abandonment of Franche-Comté, the court of Madrid had commenced their dismemberment and proved its indifference to their fate. The refusal given to the demand of the States-General, that negotiations should be entered into with Louis for the recovery of the Netherlands in exchange for Franche-Comté, could not fail to confirm the suspicions aroused as to these projects for an understanding.

The offers of the French Government had not remained unknown to De Witt, and he had shown himself justly alarmed. The cession of the Netherlands to Louis XIV. would have rendered nugatory the precautions so painfully taken by the States-General to save themselves from the proximity of France. They would lose thereby all the benefits of the Triple Alliance, and would remain exposed to the resentment of the all-powerful monarch whom they had affronted. Happily for them, the indecision of the court of Spain came to their aid. The Queen-Regent was checked by her respect for the will of Philip IV. which enjoined the retention of the Netherlands. None of her ministers had either authority or courage to take upon themselves during a regency the responsibility of

the cession. Public opinion was against it, because the Netherlands were the connecting link between Spain and the north of Europe, and prevented her from being cut off from the great continental interests. There was a sort of national tradition of the close union between the towns of Flanders and the Spanish monarchy. Still the tergiversations of the court of Madrid none the less threatened the United Provinces with an agreement with France that would have been fatal to their independence. To prevent this, De Witt had urged the States-General to leave Spain no peace—even at the risk of driving her to extremities by their demands—until she had granted to Sweden the pecuniary satisfaction she had so long evaded. By obtaining payment from Spain herself of the subsidies intended for the defence of her possessions, they made it to her interest to profit by the expenditure required for their preservation, and deprived her thenceforth of all temptation to give them up.

At the very moment when the States flattered themselves that they had no more to fear for the Netherlands, they were placed in a position where they had everything to fear for themselves, in being called upon at once to act on the defensive against both England and France. Hardly had the Triple Alliance received the definitive adhesion of Sweden, before England prepared to break away from it. 'M. de Witt will soon discover,' writes Lionne to Pomponne, 'that the States are not so entirely masters of the wills of their new allies as they had imagined.'

Notwithstanding the manifestations of public opinion in favour of the policy of alliance with the United Provinces and resistance to France, Charles II. was impatient to gratify his resentment against the republic, which he had appeared to renounce when he joined with the States-General to prevent the conquest of the Netherlands by Louis XIV. But it was not merely for the interest of England that he had entered into the Triple Alliance, it was more especially for the purpose of detaching the United Provinces from France. He had allied himself to the republic only to isolate her.

This policy had not escaped the perspicacity of the French

diplomatists. The Marquis de Pomponne at the Hague remarked upon the conduct of England as 'the effect of prudence which looked forward into futurity,' and he clearly perceived the object she proposed to herself by detaching the States-General from the interests of the King of France 'in order to profit by the forlorn condition to which they would be reduced, to impose upon them eventually a yoke which they would not have strength to shake off.' During the negotiations of the Congress of Breda, when Charles II. was treating for peace with the United Provinces, one of his ambassadors, Lord Hollis, had had occasion to converse with a French exile, Gourville, who, having been forced to leave France after the condemnation of Fouquet, and being desirous to be restored to favour with Louis XIV., had been entrusted by Lionne with a secret mission to the Princes of Brunswick-Luneburg. Lord Hollis had asked him to point out 'what measures should be taken to ruin an enemy so dangerous to the King of England as was the Grand Pensionary of Holland.' Gourville, who was dissatisfied with the reception given him by De Witt when he had been presented to him by Count d'Estrades, and had kept a grudge against him in consequence, replied to the English ambassador 'that Charles II. ought to appear to forget all that had passed, and feign to desire to form a close union for the interests of both countries. Once persuaded that the King of England was disposed to check the ambition of Louis XIV., the Grand Pensionary,' continued Gourville, 'would not fail to consider that it would be a great feather in his cap if, after having imposed conditions of peace upon England, he could lay down the law to France, an offence which the King of France would never pardon, and the King of England would thus be certain to lead him infallibly to his ruin.' Charles II. eagerly welcomed this perfidious counsel, which is mentioned by a contemporary historian, Wicquefort, and of which Gourville boasts in his Memoirs. He encouraged the republic to ally herself with England in order to oppose the French invasion of the Netherlands, and hardly had he launched her on this course than he began to treat for a reconciliation with France. 'Sir Thomas Clifford said to a

friend of mine in confidence,' writes Temple to his father, 'upon all the joy that was here at the conclusion of the Triple Alliance: "Well, for all this noise, we must yet have another war with the Dutch before it be long."'

The inclinations of Charles II. combined with his animosity towards the States-General to attach him to the French policy. Impatient of all control and ambitious of exercising absolute power, he hoped to find in an alliance with the King of France protection against his parliament, which he found too independent and too parsimonious. Having never sufficient money to satisfy his expensive tastes and love of pleasure, he was interested in obtaining pecuniary assistance from his new ally, and when he engaged in the service of Louis XIV. he was quite prepared to receive his pay.

He was urged forward in this course by his brother the Duke of York, who had renounced Protestantism, and considered the King of France as the protector of the Catholic religion. His principal councillors favoured this secret understanding. They were those who gained the surname of the Cabal, of which the initial letters of their names spelt the word: namely, Clifford, Ashley, Buckingham, Arlington, and Lauderdale. Most of them were corrupted by their ostentatious contempt and ridicule of all virtue and all truth; and they eagerly sought the alliance of France, not only to satisfy their hatred of a republic, but also in the hope of sharing in the largesses which Louis XIV. held before their eyes. By appearing favourable to the French policy they were sure of paying their court to good purpose to Charles II., whose secret sympathies they thus flattered and served.

Since the disgrace of the Lord Chancellor Clarendon, the Duke of Buckingham held the first place in the circle of favourites. He had been the companion of the King's dangers during his exile and of his pleasures since his return, and joined to the lustre of a great name the advantages of fortune and talent, but he was frivolous and intriguing. He had made himself the head of the Court party, and aspired to the direction of the government, although his only official title was Master of the Horse. He had established relations with the court of

Louis XIV., and kept up a constant correspondence with Charles's sister Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, for whom he felt or affected a devoted attachment. Next to him came the Earl of Lauderdale, Secretary of State for Scotland, who bore the honorary title of Prime Minister, who expressed no will but that of the King, and encouraged him in all measures which could free him from the tutelage of parliament. The two Commissioners of the Treasury, Sir Thomas Clifford and Lord Ashley, showed most zeal in advising and precipitating the rupture with the United Provinces. Clifford, Keeper of the Privy Purse, whose impetuous eloquence had made his fortune, and who was always ready to take any bold step, was noted for the hatred he bore towards them. Lord Ashley, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who as Earl of Shaftesbury afterwards played so conspicuous a part, had passed from the ranks of the republican party into those of the Royalists. To great and persuasive powers of speech he added a genius for intrigue which was checked by no obstacle and embarrassed by no scruple; his political programme was war with the States-General. Arlington, who held the office of Secretary of State, and fulfilled the functions of foreign minister, was the only man in the Council who might have made himself the defender of the United Provinces. He could easily have won to his side Bridgman, the Keeper of the Seals; Secretary Trevor; and the Duke of Ormonde, Viceroy of Ireland, who was kept in the background by the Court faction. Arlington had married a daughter of the Dutch ambassador, Beverwaert, and had continued until now faithful to the traditionary English policy, of defending the balance of power in Europe. But although by nature honest, he had not sufficient strength of character to remain constant to his opinions and, if necessary, to give up office for them. Neglected by the States-General, who had not sufficiently acknowledged his services, bought by the French ambassador, and fearing above all things to expose himself to the hostility of the party which enjoyed the royal favour, he was soon to abandon the line of conduct he had hitherto pursued, and to employ himself in the destruction of the Triple Alliance which he himself had concluded.

The King of England, however, was interested in not hurrying on matters, and thought himself obliged to show some consideration for the United Provinces. Fearing that they might effect a reconciliation with the King of France if he allowed them to suspect his designs, he continued towards them his familiar policy of duplicity. To foster their illusions he gave Temple the title of Resident Ambassador at the Hague, and deceived him as to his policy in order to make more sure that Temple would assist him in deceiving the States-General. No choice could have offered better security for the apparent union of England and the United Provinces. Accordingly Arlington, whom Charles had not yet taken into his confidence, wrote in all sincerity to the Grand Pensionary: 'Amongst all the good qualities of Sir William Temple, there is none which has more strongly commended him to his Majesty for employment as ambassador to the States, than the good fortune he has had of pleasing you; and if he has the same fortune of again succeeding in this, his Majesty doubts not that matters will soon be settled to the complete satisfaction of the two nations.'

On his side Temple thus announced his mission to De Witt: 'I venture to add thus much from myself, that if his Majesty did not design to cultivate our alliance with the same sincerity and good-will with which the seed was sown, he would make use of some other person than myself for this commission, of which I will give you proof by that frank and open course of action which I have always professed.' The English ambassador took advantage of his audience of reception to renew his protestations of good-will. In his frequent interviews with the Grand Pensionary also he took pains to disarm his suspicions, but yet owned 'that if there should ever be on the throne of England a prince who was insincere, or a feeble and corrupt ministry,' he could not answer for the measures which might be taken.

De Witt did not fail to respond warmly to these assurances. Forced to resist France, notwithstanding his desire to conciliate her, he had recognised, he said, 'the necessity of using England as the buckler of the republic.' He represented to

Temple 'that the States had sucked that in like milk, which was already passed into the very flesh and substance of their body.' But his confidence in the loyalty of the English Government was not free from anxiety, and his apprehensions were soon aroused. Nine months after the return of Temple to the Hague, De Witt came to see him to communicate to him, 'as a friend and not as First Minister,' his recent interview with Puffendorf, the Swedish agent in France, who had passed through the Hague on his return to Stockholm. 'The French ministers,' he said to Temple, 'feeling sure that the Swedish Government would profit by their communications, had informed Puffendorf that England had abandoned the determination to which she had arrived in concert with the States-General and Sweden, although she did not think it expedient to mention this at present.' Puffendorf not having put much faith in these confidences, and being disposed to consider them as a subterfuge employed to detach Sweden from the Triple Alliance, Turenne had shown him a letter from the French ambassador in London, Colbert de Croissy, which related the success of his negotiations, adding, 'that he had given the ministers of the King of England to understand the full extent of the liberalities of the King of France.' Temple omitted nothing that might persuade De Witt that Colbert de Croissy was boasting to Louis XIV. of a service which he had never performed, and made it a point of honour to convince him 'of his ignorance of any mystery, if any there were.' The Grand Pensionary could not forbear a smile, but would not appear to attach undue importance to a private conversation. He contented himself with remarking that certain foreign ambassadors, when they declared that England had enjoyed nine months of a great ministry, seemed thereby to insinuate that a new policy was about to prevail in the counsels of the English Government. He added that when he entered upon public life he had been very suspicious, but that he had so often suspected wrongly, that he had cured himself of that disposition. De Witt ended by promising Temple that he would not cease to consider the alliance of the two countries as the best pledge for their common safety; and assured him

that the States would continue so to act until the King of England and his ministers had informed them that they had taken other measures. He rose as he said these words, as if expecting no answer. In sending a faithful report of this conversation to the Keeper of the Seals, Temple, who was beginning to mistrust his own government, added slyly, 'that he had not been very desirous to draw their discourse into more length.'

The English Government indeed took no pains to conform its conduct to the declaration of its ambassador. It sought only to arouse disputes which might prepare the way for a rupture. The question of saluting the flag gave rise to demands which were beginning to disturb the good relations between the two countries. The King of England wished to oblige the Dutch vessels to dip their ensign to the English ships without the latter being obliged to return the salute. 'He desired thus to be acknowledged as king of the ocean,' wrote De Witt to D'Estrades. The Treaty of Breda had left this question in suspense. De Witt, unable to obtain the assistance of France in opposing the King of England's pretensions to maritime supremacy, endeavoured to find a compromise by allowing the Dutch ships to dip their ensign to the English, but on condition that the latter should return the salute. He promised Temple to use his influence to obtain the consent of the States. Temple received the proposal favourably, and in his official correspondence pointed out its advantages. But the English Government, desiring to retain a pretext for declaring war, delayed the settlement of the question.

Differences 'which seemed rather to concern shopkeepers than ministers of State,' as De Witt told Temple, embittered the controversy. The maritime treaty which De Witt had obtained in addition to the Triple Alliance had not availed to prevent all occasions of commercial rivalry, and these were not long in recurring. The East India Company had always aspired to reserve to the inhabitants of the United Provinces the monopoly of trade in the countries with which it trafficked; and in order to secure this, it had forced the distant princes with

whom it traded to close the access to their States to foreign nations, who thus found themselves excluded both from the Dutch colonies and from all the territory of the Indies. The first negotiations entered into aimed at a return to a system of freedom by which both countries would have equally profited. Temple represented to De Witt that it could be no disadvantage to the United Provinces to consent, as their superiority in trade left no possibility of dangerous rivalry with England, 'and weapons wielded by more skilful hands might with impunity be equalised.' De Witt accordingly showed himself ready to receive any proposals for conciliation, but these the English Government perpetually evaded.

A fresh dispute, of which the injustice was no less evident, gave further proof to the States-General of England's disposition to seek a quarrel with them. It concerned the possession of the island of Surinam, which had been conceded to the United Provinces by the treaty of Breda. Before evacuating it, the English governor, Lord Willoughby, had attempted, in order to ruin its trade, to expel from the colony not merely all English subjects, but also the slaves belonging to them who were employed in the manufacture of sugar. To put an end to the cause of dispute, the States of Holland, led by De Witt, might have been disposed to give up the island in return for a pecuniary compensation. But the States of Zealand, for whose profit it had been conquered by their own squadron, refused to yield possession. Firmly resolved, however, to indemnify England, the Grand Pensionary succeeded in bringing about an agreement intended to satisfy her, and thus gave a new pledge of the policy of moderation which he never ceased to practise. In the hope of putting an end to these discords, and of drawing closer the bonds of alliance which were beginning to slacken, the States-General sent Van Beuningen to London as ambassador extraordinary. He was the more likely to be well received by Charles II. as he had already been in frequent communication with the English ambassador in Paris, while preparing and concluding the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle between France and Spain. The favourable dispositions which he had begun to manifest

towards the young Prince of Orange seemed besides to insure him the favour of the King of England. Finally, the acquaintance he had gained with French politics enabled him o watch over the negotiations set on foot by Louis XIV. with Charles II., and to throw light upon the suspicions that were beginning to be awakened in the Grand Pensionary's mind. 'No man,' writes a contemporary, 'seemed to him so fit to revive in London an ardour which it was so important not to allow to be extinguished.' Knowing this, Louis XIV. desired his ambassador, the Marquis de Croissy, to be beforehand with him 'to hinder this great braggart from making an impression on the minds of the King of England's councillors.' But no skill of the Dutch ambassador could affect resolutions already irrevocably formed. 'If he comes to outwit us—I mean, to lead us out of our own measures into some of his—,' writes Arlington to Temple, 'he may be deceived.'

Van Beuningen, besides, stultified his embassy by allowing himself to be duped, and thus damaged his diplomatic reputation to the detriment of his employers. He made them the victims of his self-confidence, which was such that, in his first embassy—to Sweden—having accompanied Queen Christina on a hunting party, he tried to pass himself off as an accomplished horseman at the great risk of being thrown. Before his departure from the Hague, Van Beuningen had received, through the Grand Pensionary, most satisfactory letters from the resident minister of the United Provinces in England, John Boreel, lord of Westhoven, 'appointed,' says Wicquefort, 'on the nomination of the States of Zealand, although his intelligence was small and his judgment poor.' Boreel had not profited by his embassy to obtain any enlightenment as to the dispositions of the King and his ministers. His credulity could not fail to influence Van Beuningen, who was the more ready to share it that his intercourse with the ministers of Charles II. inspired him with complete confidence. As soon as he arrived in London he was placed in communication with the Keeper of the Seals and Secretary Trevor, who had been kept in ignorance of the negotiations commenced between Charles and Louis. The sincerity with which both

renewed to him the most favourable declarations as to the Triple Alliance completed his deception.

The check that he met with at the outset of his negotiations did not suffice to enlighten him. Instructed to obtain the consent of Charles II. to the admission of the Emperor into the Triple Alliance, he could gain no hearing for his proposals. The King of England had, in fact, bound himself by his engagements with France to refuse his consent, and to satisfy Louis XIV. he appointed to the conferences held with Van Beuningen those of his councillors who were noted for their hostility to the republic—Clifford and Ashley. According to the declarations made by the English commissioners to the ambassador of the States, the offers of the court of Vienna were to be rejected on the flimsy pretext that the Emperor was only proposing a defensive league in order to draw his allies into a guarantee of his territories against the Turkish invasion. Meanwhile, wishing to avoid all explanation, Charles II. was careful to keep at a distance the envoy of the court of Vienna, Baron Lisola; and to prevent his coming to London let him know 'that he could pay no attention to the Emperor's request.' The embassy from which the States-General had promised themselves such a happy issue thus disappointed their expectation.

The last hopes remaining to them of preserving the alliance of England could only be justified by the presence at the Hague of Sir William Temple. But he was beginning to foresee his recall. 'I will beg of you not to be swayed,' he wrote to Arlington, 'by considerations of kindness to me, in a matter of public concernment . . . for while the King's business goes well it is not two straws' matter whether such a body as I have any share in it or no.' To avert his threatened disgrace, he affected sometimes to be captious and touchy towards the government of the United Provinces. One of his secretaries having been summoned before the court of Holland, he haughtily asserted his ambassadorial privileges, and ventured to write as follows to the procurator of the court: 'I think it well to tell you that I consider as an impertinence the act that you have just committed against a

member of my suite, apparently desiring to treat me like one of your own shopkeepers.' But in acting thus he did violence to his own feelings, and whenever he thought himself at liberty to follow his personal inclinations, far from provoking disputes, he employed himself only in preventing or pacifying them.

Two demands for the extradition of English republican refugees in the United Provinces had been addressed to him. One was for the delivering up of three Presbyterian ministers. He evaded it by replying that it had been impossible to discover them, and that the decree of the States ordering their expulsion must be accepted as sufficient. The other required the arrest of a former officer in Cromwell's army, Cornet George Joyce, now living at Rotterdam, who in 1647 had conducted King Charles I. as a prisoner to Hampton Court. Forced to obey the instructions he had received, and unable to address himself to the States of Holland, who were not sitting at the time, Temple communicated with the councillor-deputies, who despatched two of their number, Cornelius de Witt and Voorbruck, to the magistrates of Rotterdam. The latter refused to permit a breach of the laws of hospitality, and when after long debate they consented to make an order for the arrest of Joyce to enable Temple to examine him, the refugee had had time to escape. In his report to Secretary Trevor of the failure of this negotiation, Temple was careful to set the conduct of the Grand Pensionary free from all blame, and made a point of doing justice to the explanations which De Witt had hastened to offer in his correspondence with Van Beuningen. He represented that the miscarriage of his demand must be imputed to the constitution of the republic, 'which not only permits of no action without the consent of the province interested, but also allows independent jurisdiction to each town in each province,' and thus offered almost insurmountable obstacles to the satisfaction that he had been commissioned to obtain. Such considerations were too much opposed to the designs of Charles II. for him not to be anxious to rid himself, without further delay, of an ambassador who was disposed to avoid all pretexts for a rupture instead of seeking and finding them.

While the United Provinces were thus abandoned by their new ally, whose only intention now was to betray them, the King of France, against whom they thought they had secured the support of England, was menacing them with his anger. Arrested in his conquest of the Netherlands by the intervention of the States-General, Louis XIV. could not forgive them for having brought against him a league 'which baffled all his measures.' He had prudently paused before this barrier which set bounds to his ambition until he was strong enough to overthrow it; but, as he himself wrote,[1] 'he felt himself stung to the quick, and was determined to be revenged.' After being victorious over Spain, and inducing the Emperor of Germany to share in his projects of division of the Spanish monarchy, he could not pardon the United Provinces for undertaking to defend the balance of power in Europe against his ambition, and he promised himself to make them repent the foresight of the great minister who had foiled his plans. He declared afterwards 'that since the peace he had never entered his council without remembering the ingratitude of a State which owed its enfranchisement and its power to the protection of the Kings of France.' His desire for vengeance was so open that the day after peace had been signed with Spain, the Spanish ambassador had not feared to say, 'It will soon be the turn of the United Provinces.' From Paris, as well as from Berlin, Stockholm, and Venice, the envoys and secret agents of the States-General sent home advices which foretold an imminent rupture.

The principal advisers of Louis XIV. shared his animosity towards the United Provinces. Marshal Villeroi was the only one who declared himself in favour of the States-General, faithful to the traditional policy of France, 'who could not fail,' he said, 'to lose an arm by a war with her old allies.' But Louvois, Colbert, and Lionne pronounced strongly against the republic. Louvois, who had been associated with his father Letellier in his office of Secretary of State for War, had made preparations for a new campaign to complete the

[1] Unpublished memoir of Louis XIV. on the war of 1672. Rousset, *Histoire de Louvois*, vol. i. p. 519.

conquest of the Netherlands, and could not be consoled for the conclusion of peace. 'I have had to bring my mind,' he writes, 'to contemplate the occurrence of the thing in all the world I least desired.' Colbert might have been expected to advise a pacific policy in the interest of the finances, but he allowed himself to be tempted by the hope of destroying the commerce of the United Provinces for the benefit of France. Lionne, humiliated at having only heard of the Triple Alliance when it was already concluded, was impatient for reparation. 'I may say beforehand,' he declared, 'that I do not think the King is inclined to let his hair be rubbed up the wrong way by anyone.' 'It is not for traders who are themselves usurpers,' he adds in another letter, 'to decide as sovereigns upon the interests of the two greatest monarchs of Christendom.' He was anxious for their punishment, and only postponed it to give it greater effect. 'Let us be content to appear to be the anvil,' he writes, 'and do all in our power to become the hammer.'

Public opinion, so far as it could obtain expression under an absolute monarchy, encouraged this feeling of irritation. The country had resented as an affront the obstacle placed by the mediation of the States-General in the way of the aggrandisement of France. 'We are turning our anger against the Dutch, who must be held henceforward as our most redoubtable enemies,' writes one of Lionne's correspondents to him from Paris, 'and from all that is said here, I adjure you both for your own reputation and for the public satisfaction to omit nothing in your policy that may give you the means of overthrowing this new power that has arisen.'

The danger of this hostility had been pointed out to De Witt long before by D'Estrades. As far back as the year 1663, so soon as the opposition of the States-General to the designs of Louis XIV. had shown itself, he had represented to the Grand Pensionary 'of what resentment the King of France might be capable, if after the defection of which they had already been guilty in the peace of Münster the States should again depart from an alliance to which they had just pledged themselves in a recent treaty.' Van Beuningen's report of his

mission, and the departure of Count d'Estrades, could hardly leave the States-General any further doubt as to the conduct which the King of France proposed to observe towards them in future. On his return to the Hague, Van Beuningen acquainted his employers with the hostile and menacing attitude of Louis XIV. He informed the States-General of the measures which were to be taken against their commerce, advising them to answer by reprisals; and took the opportunity of these alarming communications to suggest to them 'that they should address themselves to the different European courts, point out to them the dangers of French domination, and represent the necessity of securing themselves by mutual assistance from subjection to the same yoke.'

Louis XIV. was not long in justifying these apprehensions, by recalling from the Hague Count d'Estrades, who had represented him there for six years. The Grand Pensionary, who had been on the most intimate footing with him, desired his continuance in office: 'believing him to be better disposed towards the States than those from whom he received his orders.' Although their friendship had been cooled by the invasion of the Netherlands and the conclusion of the Triple Alliance, he foresaw that his departure would increase the difficulties of any attempt at reconciliation. But his recall had become inevitable. Mistrusted by Louis XIV. for his leaning towards the republic, D'Estrades could no longer avert disgrace, since he had allowed himself to be duped by John de Witt's diplomatic skill, and had remained in ignorance of the negotiations entered into by the States-General with England and Sweden. Recognising for himself the impossibility of remaining at his post, he asked leave to retire, alleging the necessity of putting his affairs in order. As soon, therefore, as the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was concluded, Louis XIV. summoned him to render an account of his embassy, being at the same time quite resolved not to continue him in it. He showed his displeasure by refusing him the dignity of Marshal of France, for which Count d'Estrades had petitioned as one of the oldest generals in the kingdom, and when he sent him back to the Hague it was only to request an audience to take leave.

D'Estrades had to be satisfied with the regrets of the States as his sole recompense.

To conceal from them his projects for a speedy rupture, Louis, after a few months' delay, replaced him, in February 1669, by the Marquis de Pomponne, nephew of the great Arnaud, whose services he had appreciated in his embassies to Sweden. 'He was,' says Wicquefort, 'an honest man and an able minister, whose natural disposition was towards the preservation of the peace of Christendom; but he had no motive for attaching himself to a nation with which he was as yet unacquainted.' The instructions given him by Louis XIV. enjoined upon him the greatest circumspection, and the encouragement of any proposals that might restore confidence to the States by leaving them the hope of a reconciliation. But he was required at the same time to favour the internal divisions of the republic, by showing marked attentions to the Prince of Orange. 'My commission was the more difficult,' writes Pomponne in his Mémoires, 'that my business was to reassure sagacious and suspicious people by amusing them with words and speeches, and to delude them by ostensible negotiations without entering into any in reality.'

On his arrival at the Hague, the ambassador of France hastened to place himself in communication with the Grand Pensionary. Lionne had taken care to secure him a favourable reception by letting De Witt know 'how delighted Pomponne would be to have an opportunity of appreciating his extraordinary merits.' In order more surely to gain his confidence, Pomponne, knowing how greatly the Grand Pensionary mistrusted all those artifices of skill and cunning which made most of the mystery of diplomacy, met him, or rather affected to meet him, with a frankness that might disarm all suspicion. He conformed himself to the instructions given him, by allowing De Witt to imagine that the former agreement might be restored if the States-General would lend themselves to a fresh departure in policy; and gave him to understand that the King of France desired to have no negotiations with anyone but him, so high was the esteem in which he held him.

The Grand Pensionary was disposed to accept these advances, without, however, being thrown off his guard. It was rather from necessity than from inclination that he had had recourse to the co-operation of England; he had sought it only to secure the United Provinces against the proximity of France, but had not concealed from himself how precarious this alliance might be, in consequence of the resentment of Charles II. towards the republic. His solicitude, too, for the preservation of the republican government, made him desirous that union with England should not be indispensable to the States-General. The Orange party was strengthening as the Prince of Orange grew up, and some of the deputies of the States of Holland, jealous of the authority of John de Witt, seemed disposed to break away from the dominant party. The Grand Pensionary was, therefore, interested in not letting the republic become dependent upon the King of England, the uncle of the young Prince. He had accordingly taken pains to avoid giving any cause of complaint to France, in order to preserve the chance of reconciliation. Spain having requested to be admitted to the Triple Alliance, he caused her proposal to be rejected, in spite of Temple's urgent advice. 'I have never desired,' he said, 'to transform a treaty for the maintenance of peace into a league which might be considered by France as a provocation.' He hoped that the French Government would appreciate this discretion on the part of the republic, with which indeed Lionne appeared to be satisfied.

From the moment of the arrival of the Marquis de Pomponne, De Witt was careful to show still more plainly how much he was in favour of a policy of reconciliation. In his first interview with the new ambassador, after acknowledging all the services rendered by France to the republic, he expressed his regret that the invasion of the Netherlands should have troubled the harmony of the two States; but he urged, on the other hand, that the restoration of peace ought to secure their friendship from further prejudice. He attempted to convince the French ambassador that the allies had, in acceding to the request of Spain to become sureties for the

peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, only exercised the right recognised by Louis XIV. in one of the articles of the treaty, and he pledged himself to obtain from the States a similar guarantee towards France; and in his anxiety to interest Louis in an alliance with the republic, he expressed a warm desire for a mutual understanding in the event of the death of the King of Spain.

Van Beuningen, who had been accused by Louis of wishing to head a party hostile to France, conformed his conduct to the declarations of the Grand Pensionary. The enemies of the republic at the court of Versailles had given credit to the report that Van Beuningen had caused to be struck and put in circulation at the time of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, a medal, in which he was represented in the person of Joshua arresting the sun in his course, with these words engraved upon it: *Sta, sol.* It appeared intended as a reply directly attacking the medal in which Louis XIV. had taken the sun as his emblem, with this device: *Nullius impar.*

As soon as Van Beuningen was informed of the enmity he had thus incurred, he called upon the French ambassador for the purpose of most warmly denying an accusation which seemed, as he wrote afterwards, 'to have been invented merely as a joke against him.' He assured the Marquis de Pomponne 'that, far from having had any hand in such folly, there was no man either in France or in this country who could say that he had ever heard him speak otherwise than with the highest respect of the conduct of the King of France in the last peace.' Lionne replied to this disavowal by declaring 'that it had given great pleasure to the King, as Van Beuningen had appeared to him so able a man that he never should have thought him capable of having committed so great and so rash a folly.' It continued none the less to be imputed to him.

The reception given by the States to the Marquis de Pomponne, was a conclusive proof how much the republic was disposed to re-establish good relations with France. He delayed for three months his first audience in order to have his whole suite collected for his state entry into the Hague. The

deputies of the States met him in their carriages outside the town, and alighted to offer him an address. Having responded to this, he was invited to seat himself in a coach drawn by six horses, in which two deputies occupied the front seat, while at the doors were the four colonels of the French regiments in the service of the republic. The coach, preceded by the ambassador's equerry and four pages on horseback, was followed by the four gentlemen of his household also on horseback, behind whom walked his twelve footmen. Three other carriages magnificently caparisoned and filled with French officers completed the procession. 'I met with a great crowd when I entered the town,' he writes in his account of the ceremony, 'and I may say that the streets were filled with the populace, while ladies and people of quality were at all the windows.' He adds complacently that 'no ambassador to this country had ever made a finer entry.'

De Witt hoped that this courtesy and these demonstrations would assist the negotiations which, without prejudice to the Triple Alliance, might guarantee the republic against the enmity of France. To bring them to a conclusion, the Grand Pensionary proposed to Louis XIV. an agreement on the subject of the Netherlands, to depend upon the death of the King of Spain. No engagement had been entered into by the allies in prevision of such an event. The conventions of the Triple Alliance only stipulated the preservation of the Netherlands to the young King of Spain during his lifetime, and, as his feeble health was constantly suggesting a vacancy on the throne, the guarantee desired by the States-General remained very precarious, and was of use to them only to gain time. It was an object to them consequently to endeavour to prevent by a mutual agreement the final transformation of the Netherlands into a French province, in the eventual dismemberment of the Spanish monarchy.

The division of the Netherlands between France and the republic would not remedy the danger which might result from the proximity of their frontiers, and could not fail to awaken the pretensions of England. De Witt accordingly never lost sight of the scheme for the erection of the Netherlands into

an independent state. This was the project which in his remarkable political foresight he had always considered most favourable to the interests of the United Provinces. He did not despair of persuading Louis XIV. to reconsider it, by fresh negotiations which would at least enable him to discover the designs of the King of France, and to make them known to Europe. According to the plan submitted by De Witt to Pomponne, Louis XIV. was to retain the new possessions he had conquered from Spain, only restoring the most advanced posts of which he had made himself master and receiving in return Cambrai, Aire, and Saint Omer—'those doors which have always been open for the invasion of his kingdom, and which would now be closed.' The United Provinces, on the other hand, were to give up any idea of enlarging their frontier by fresh acquisitions, and to leave to the new republic the integrity of her dominions.

Louis XIV. might thus, by abandoning his pretensions to that part of the Spanish Netherlands which he had not yet conquered, have obtained peaceably on the death of the King of Spain an exchange most advantageous to his own kingdom. For the vicinity of the House of Austria in the Netherlands, which had so long been inconvenient and even dangerous to France, he would have substituted that of a little republic, placed under his protection and necessarily dependent upon him. By leaving to the United Provinces the safeguard of a barrier between their frontier and that of France, he might have rendered indissoluble the alliance with the States-General, which had been the traditional policy of France. He would thus have secured at once the safety of his own dominions and the peace of Europe, and would have placed himself beyond the reach of those coalitions which were so grievously to harass the last years of his reign. But, believing himself to be secure of the future by the treaty for the division of the Spanish monarchy which he had obtained from the Emperor of Germany, Louis XIV. preferred his revenge to his interests, and subordinated his policy to his resentment against the United Provinces. If he had allowed his ambassador to continue to discuss preliminaries with John

de Witt, it was only in order to detach the States-General from the Triple Alliance and to deprive them of the support of their allies. The Grand Pensionary perceived the trap, and was too wary to fall into it. 'He is too skilful,' wrote Pomponne, 'to give me an opening to take any such advantage.' His honesty as well as his prudence prevented his being the dupe of such perfidy, and the States-General, steadily following his advice, continued faithful to their diplomatic engagements. Temple, wishing to reassure the English court against all suspicion of defection, testified to their loyalty in these words: 'As to craft and duplicity, I do not think their taste or their disposition are inclined that way. For my own part, I shall continue to regard them as honest traders of good repute, which they will endeavour to preserve by straightforward conduct.'

Not only did De Witt absolutely refuse to prejudice the Triple Alliance by a secret agreement with France, not choosing to dispose of the Netherlands before the death of the King of Spain, but he insisted that in the event of the succession to the Spanish monarchy becoming open, the negotiations concerning the fate of the Low Countries should be carried on in concert with England and Sweden. Foiled in his expectation, Louis XIV. had no further interest in prolonging the negotiations. Unable to obtain from the States-General any engagement in contravention of the Triple Alliance, he determined to leave them henceforward no hope of an understanding, and he wrote to his ambassador: 'I will not endure that Monsieur de Witt, with all his skill, should pretend to engage me in any negotiations, after I have declared to him through yourself that they must be adjourned to some other time.'

Not content with opposing so peremptory a refusal to the conciliatory offers made by the Grand Pensionary, Louis replied to them by manifest tokens of ill-will. The pretensions and proceedings of the French Government in the Netherlands having aroused the just susceptibilities of Spain, the States-General, through the medium of the Grand Pensionary, had offered remonstrances to the French ambassador, both in their

own name and in those of the ministers of England and Sweden. Louis refused any explanation, and then, thinking it necessary to reassure Europe as to his pacific intentions, made choice of England and Sweden, to the exclusion of the United Provinces, as arbitrators in his differences with the Spanish Government. De Witt with his usual prudence took no notice of the affront offered to the republic. He even declared to the Marquis de Pomponne 'that he was obliged to the King of France for sparing his employers the pain of disobliging one or both parties by the judgment they would have had to deliver.' Notwithstanding this ill-disguised provocation on the part of the King of France, which De Witt termed a discourteous proceeding, the Grand Pensionary occupied himself solely in persuading the court of Madrid to accept this mediation, from which they seemed disposed to hold aloof if the States-General were excluded. After prolonged discussions he finally induced it to submit to the arbitration of England and Sweden. His whole policy was subordinated to the preservation of peace.

Still continuing their part of mediators, the States-General offered to France their guarantee of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle which had been given to Spain by the powers signing the Triple Alliance. Louis XIV. had demanded this guarantee of the Grand Pensionary through Count d'Estrades in the belief that it would be refused; but when the States-General seemed disposed to grant it, he appeared averse from it. Having no fear that Spain would declare war against him, he cared little about a treaty which he had been forced to accept, and which he was himself inclined to break. He contented himself with replying to the offer which had been made to him 'that the surest guarantee of peace would be his desire to maintain it.' The States had thus vainly endeavoured to content him, and found themselves again repulsed. Still unwearied, they continued to offer him tokens of their deference. On learning with some uneasiness that Louis XIV. attended by his court and his household troops was coming to visit his new possessions in the Netherlands, they sent to meet him a formal deputation

headed by the son of their late Admiral, Wassenaar Obdam, who belonged to one of the first families in the land. Obdam was commissioned to deliver to him a letter assuring him 'of the continuance of their affection,' and praying him to place full confidence in the statements of their ambassador. Received by the King at Ryssel, May 23, 1670, he was obliged to be satisfied with the marks of cold civility which were reproduced by Louis in his answer to the letter from the States.

It was not offers of co-operation, of friendship or submission, that the King of France desired to obtain from the States-General. He hoped, on the contrary, to discover in their conduct towards him subject for complaint which might give him the pretext he sought for a rupture. 'It would be well,' wrote Lionne to Pomponne, 'that they should accumulate one fault upon another, for his Majesty will thus be better justified in the eyes of the world if an opportunity should present itself to let them feel the weight of his hand.'

That he might leave his ambassador in no doubt as to the part on which he had now irrevocably determined, Louis XIV. took advantage of his journey to Flanders to send for him. Whilst the Grand Pensionary was hoping that this interview might be favourable to fresh attempts at reconciliation, Pomponne was learning from the king himself, in a mysterious communication, that the United Provinces had nothing to expect from France but a speedy declaration of war. His manuscript memoirs give us a curious account of this royal confidence. 'On the eve of my departure,' he writes, 'I had hardly got into bed, when I was awakened by the Marquis de Berny, son of Monsieur de Lionne, who in his father's absence exercised his functions about the king. He told me to rise at once, as his Majesty wished to speak to me. We repaired alone and without lights to the guard-room. I remained there in an obscure corner until all those who have the right of remaining at the King's *petit coucher* had taken their leave. Then the Marquis de Berny came to fetch me, and led me to the King's room without my being seen by anyone. I found the King alone, in his dressing-gown, sitting at the table. He did me the honour to tell me that the importance

of the things he was about to disclose to me would sufficiently show me what confidence he placed in me, and how necessary was the discretion with which I must guard them. He then explained to me fully all the measures that he had taken, and which would allow him in the following year to commence the war with the republic. Having represented to me that only three of his ministers, Lionne, Letellier, and Colbert, were acquainted with this profound State secret, the King concluded the interview by informing me that he had thought it essential to acquaint me with the true state of affairs, that I might regulate my conduct in Holland accordingly, evading any proposals that might be made to me, and merely appearing to listen to them so as to elude the penetration of the Grand Pensionary and the suspicions of the States. Touched as was fitting by the confidence of the King, and enlightened by the new knowledge he had given to me, I quitted the apartment as secretly as I had entered it, and returned to the Hague.' The assurances given by Pomponne to De Witt when he declared to him 'that the King had the more readily received his overtures, that he considered them as a mark of his desire to bring back his employers to their original connection with France,' could not restore to the Grand Pensionary his lost confidence. It was not long before his apprehensions were justified.

Four months later, in August 1670, Louis XIV. put to the proof the often-tried patience of the States-General, and invited a quarrel by his audacious aggression in full time of peace upon their ally the Duke of Lorraine, whose dominions he had long coveted. He looked upon them, as De Witt remarked, 'as a citadel in a town from which all the rest would be commanded at leisure.' He had accordingly attempted to turn to profit the weakness of mind and irregularities of conduct of the reigning duke, which seemed to place him at his mercy. Charles IV., Duke of Lorraine, belonging to one of the most ancient princely families of Europe, was a hero of romance who had strayed by mistake into the seventeenth century. Brave and adventurous, gifted with talents for war, but tormented by the wish to play a great part, 'and having

neither stability of character nor consistency of conduct,' he had entered into a struggle with Richelieu which had been fatal to himself and ruinous to his country. Expelled once, in 1634, and reduced to being merely, as Saint Simon writes, 'a prince-errant without hearth or home,' he had taken service with the Fronde, and had subsequently endured the persecution of the Spanish Government, who had held him prisoner for six years. Having recovered his dominions by the Peace of the Pyrenees, in 1659, he had three years later transferred his succession to Louis XIV., to the prejudice of his nephew, in consideration of the princes of the House of Lorraine being recognised as princes of the blood-royal of France. This convention had barely been signed before he repented it, but he had only been able to release himself by surrendering to Louis the strong place of Marsal, which gave the key of Lorraine into the hands of the King of France.

Constantly threatened with a fresh invasion, Charles IV. had yet been forced after the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle to dismiss his troops, as Louis feared that the Duke might place them at the disposal of the United Provinces. That he might not be left defenceless, he endeavoured to obtain the guarantee of his dukedom by the States-General, England, and Sweden, in consideration of his participation in the Triple Alliance, promising to persuade the Electors of Trèves and Mayence to follow his example. Louis XIV., getting scent of these negotiations by the despatch of the Duke's chief agent Monsieur de Risaucourt to the Hague, became uneasy, though he affected to laugh at them. He feared that the offers of Charles IV. in favour of the Triple Alliance might be an encouragement not only to the Princes of the Empire, but to the Emperor himself, and might thus become an obstacle to his designs upon the Netherlands and the United Provinces. After menacing with his anger the Grand Pensionary of Holland if he accepted the proposals of the Duke of Lorraine, he resolved to find in them the pretext he sought to increase his kingdom by the annexation of a new province.

Without any preliminary declaration of war, and in time of full peace, the King of France sent his forces to invade

Lorraine, but did not succeed in obtaining possession of the person of Charles IV., who sought safety in a prompt flight and retired to Cologne. The town of Épinal, where a few nobles had gathered round them the Duke's household troops and the militia of the country, was the only place that attempted resistance. A month sufficed to complete the subjection of the duchy. For twenty-seven years Lorraine was to lose her independence. But the old Duke cherished so obstinate a faith in the justice of his cause, and his nephew Charles V. rendered such brilliant services to the enemies of France as commander-in-chief of the German armies, that Louis XIV. was compelled by the peace of Ryswick, in 1697, to restore to the young heir of Charles V. possession of his hereditary dominions.

So audacious a violation of the rights of nations was a challenge to all Europe. The United Provinces could not conceal from themselves the dangers with which this enterprise menaced them. In arrogating to himself the right of attacking and conquering other countries without first demanding reparation for any offence, Louis XIV. gave warning to the republic of the fate that awaited it. Accordingly, notwithstanding the circumspection they still desired to preserve, the States-General warmly welcomed the envoys of the Duke of Lorraine, who came to demand their intervention. Recalling his pacific declarations to the French ambassador, they pressed him to make known the grievances which Louis XIV. could bring against Charles IV., and had the boldness to represent to him that Lorraine should at least be restored to the duke's nephew, who was his lawful heir. Louis XIV. contented himself with alleging that the Duke had been the aggressor, by concerting measures with the States-General and the German Princes for the concentration of a body of troops between the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Sarre. He accused him of having by this means intended to place auxiliary forces at the disposal of Spain, for the renewal of the war in the event of Spain refusing to execute the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. He affirmed also in his despatches that the Duke's envoy had negotiated this treaty with the Grand Pensionary,

and wrote to his ambassador 'that the denials of John de Witt seemed to him impudent.'

Unable to flatter themselves that they could obtain justice single-handed, the States-General placed their hopes in the appeal which they addressed to the Emperor and the King of England, who were both interested in preventing the King of France from aggrandising himself at the expense of his neighbours. They spared no pains, therefore, to secure their efficacious assistance.

The negotiations entrusted to Bruyninex, their envoy at Vienna, to induce the Emperor to join the Triple Alliance, had remained until now in suspense. The French ambassador, the Chevalier de Gremonville, by launching the feeble Leopold upon a fresh sea of doubt, and intimidating him with threats, had deterred him from all projects of an agreement with the republic. But the invasion of Lorraine suddenly dispelled the good understanding between the two courts. Charles IV. found the Emperor the more disposed to protect him since his nephew, after the brilliant share he had taken in the victory of St. Gothard over the Turks in 1663, had been appointed general of the imperial cavalry. Moreover, the conquest of his duchy, which extended as far as Alsace and which was a dependency of the Empire, could not fail to appear alarmin to Germany. Called upon by the Diet of Ratisbon to obtain the restoration of the Duke's dominions, the Emperor determined to send Count Windischgrätz, one of the principal personages at his court, as ambassador to Louis XIV. to offer his mediation; it was rejected with haughty arrogance. 'This country belongs to me,' the King of France declared to the imperial envoy, 'and nobody has now a better right to it than I have.' The Emperor resented the affront offered to him by such a reply, and recalled his ambassador.

De Witt took skilful advantage of this change of sentiment, to concert with the envoy of the court of Vienna at the Hague, Baron Lisola, the draft of a treaty by which the Emperor was to join the Triple Alliance, to guarantee the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, and to bind himself even to

break with France should Louis attack the United Provinces. Leopold allowed himself to be persuaded. Notwithstanding the disavowals addressed to Lisola by his ministers, and the assurances which the French ambassador still continued to extract from him, he consented to take the step required, and wrote to Charles II. to inform him that he offered to join in the Triple Alliance.

Whilst the States-General were thus obtaining an almost unhoped-for declaration of support, the King of England, whose co-operation they had a right confidently to expect, rejected the proposals made by the Emperor, and thus made public his complicity with France. At the first news of the invasion of Lorraine, the Grand Pensionary accompanied by the commissioners from the States-General had visited the English ambassador, Sir William Temple, to represent to him strongly the dangers of this aggression and this conquest. It was by the orders, he said, of the States-General that he had come to consult with him, in order that the powers which had entered into the Triple Alliance might act in concert. He requested him, therefore, to ask for instructions without loss of time, as the United Provinces could not dispense with the co-operation of Charles in settling upon a course of action. 'If England,' he added, 'did not come to their assistance, they must commit themselves to the grace of God, and would see the French at their gates without flinching.' Charles only replied to this communication by summoning Temple to give an account of his embassy. Arlington, in transmitting to him this unexpected command, instructed him, it is true, to assure the States that his absence would not be of long duration, and enjoined him to leave his family at the Hague. But the recall of the most loyal champion of the English alliance at the moment when it was most necessary to the United Provinces, left no room for further vain illusions.

On being informed of the departure of the ambassador on whose support he counted to avert the approaching peril, the Grand Pensionary could not conceal from Temple his surprise. He first enumerated to him the reasons for mistrust which the English Government had given to the States-General, and then

brought forward on the other side all the tokens of good-will and loyalty offered by the United Provinces. He solemnly recalled to him all the promises made by the King of England, 'without,' he said, 'going so far as to accuse him of wishing to break them, to the prejudice of his interest and his honour.' 'You know better than anyone,' he added, 'that it was the King your master who persuaded the States to sacrifice the old friendship which bound them to France, in order to guard him against the danger of her power, when they could have obtained all that they desired from her, in consideration of the partition of Flanders.' Then, abandoning all circumlocution, and addressing the English ambassador with the familiarity usual between them, he called upon him to explain this mystery. Temple responded to his confidence as a man of honour. He did not conceal from him that the same reflections had crossed his mind, but he could not bring himself to believe that any government was capable of taking measures so inimical to its own good name and to the interests of the public. To temper this avowal, he added that the despatches sent to him had never ceased to be favourable to the alliance between the two countries, and was careful to let De Witt see some possibility of his return. He proudly declared, however, that he could only answer for himself, but assured him that if such a change of policy occurred, he would have no hand in it, as he had already frequently protested to the King himself. 'I have no further information to give you at present,' he concluded, 'excepting that I must go to England. If I return, you will know more, and I feel sure from what you have said to me that if I do not return you will guess still further.' De Witt smiled sadly, and replied that in the mean time 'he would try to cure himself and others of all suspicions concerning this journey.' The conversation was too painful for both not to desire to bring it to an end, and they parted never to meet again. Such was the last interview of the two great ministers who appreciated each other as friends as well as statesmen. The account left by Temple bears the touching impress of the sadness with which they bade each other farewell.

As soon as he arrived in London, Temple found that his

suspicions must give place to certainty. After keeping him a long time waiting for an audience, Arlington received him with unusual coldness instead of his customary kindness, and in order to avoid talking of business, called to his side his little daughter of three years of age, whose presence served to interrupt all conversation. The next day, instead of presenting Temple to the King, he took him to meet Charles while the latter was walking in the Mall, and amusing himself with feeding his ducks. The King received him civilly, but carefully avoided talking to him of his embassy. Temple could no longer feel any doubt as to the cause of this intentional silence, after hearing the vehement invectives to which Sir Thomas Clifford gave way in the interview which followed the royal audience. Clifford, whose impetuous temper sometimes led him into indiscretions, complained that the States-General had not been brought to reason. On Temple demanding an explanation of this reproof, and asking to be told what he thought a man could do more, Clifford replied angrily, 'he would tell him what a man might do more and what he ought to do more: which was to let the King and all the world know how basely and unworthily the States had used him; and to declare publicly how their ministers were a company of rogues and rascals, and not fit for his Majesty or any other prince to have anything to do with.' Temple met this outburst with imperturbable calmness. He answered Clifford that 'he was not a man fit to make declarations; that whenever he did upon any occasion he should speak of all men what he thought of them, and so he should do of the States and their ministers.' Too honest to sacrifice his opinions to his interest, and quite aware that his truth and candour would bring disgrace upon him, he made up his mind to retirement. 'I have been long enough in courts and public business,' he wrote afterwards to his father, 'to know a great deal of the world and of myself, and to find that we are not made for one another.' Accordingly he retired to his country house in search of the tranquillity of private life. He appeared to himself more fitted to make a good gardener than an able minister; and 'the fruits of his garden,' he declared

sarcastically, 'seemed to him to preserve better than those of his embassies.' The alliance between England and the Republic of the United Provinces, which had been the object of his policy, could no longer afford him any hope of continuance, and he had to look on sadly at the ruin of the work which he had hoped to render of service to the peace of Europe.

The persevering efforts of the Grand Pensionary to bring to a conclusion the negotiations carried on by Van Beuningen in London, were doomed to remain without effect. In vain did De Witt urge the King of England to reply to the invasion of Lorraine by agreeing to the admission of the Emperor into the Triple Alliance. Charles II. showed complete indifference to the fate of the dispossessed prince notwithstanding the services rendered to him in his exile by the Duke of Lorraine, and he continued to evade the proposals of the States. Having declared that he should wait until the Emperor avowed his intentions in a preliminary declaration, he paid no attention to it when it was transmitted to him. Van Beuningen, with difficulty undeceived, was forced to leave London at last, having obtained nothing but barren promises of good-will. 'I am willing,' he writes, 'to throw no doubt upon the protestations of sincerity constantly made to me by Secretary Trevor; but I begin to believe that he is himself deceived, and I cannot help remarking that Arlington, who until now had appeared to me to remain steadfast in his favourable disposition, is seeking for quibbles, as if he were desirous to transfer his affections.'

The urgency of the ordinary ambassador, Boreel, continued after Van Beuningen's departure, only served to obtain his dismissal. The States, made proof against discouragement by De Witt, instructed Boreel to address a last appeal to the King of England, representing to him that he could not refuse to admit the Emperor into the Triple Alliance without at least offering some explanation to the allies, on whom he was thus inflicting a great wrong. Charles II., considering all concealment superfluous, declared to him 'that he was on good terms with France, and did not choose to

disoblige her,' adding 'that the interests of the Empire did not concern England.' Boreel transmitted to the States this communication, which closed the way to all negotiation, and announced to them the dissolution of the Triple Alliance. 'I am enjoying by anticipation,' wrote the French ambassador at the Hague to Louis XIV., 'the pleasure of seeing the growing division in a union which was supposed to be established against France, and the satisfaction of seeing that the ruin of a work which has occupied the courts of Europe for nearly three years is the result of the conduct and skill of your Majesty.'

But there was a still more formidable peril awaiting the States-General than the abandonment with which they were thus menaced: the union of their allies with their enemies was what they had now to fear. The alliance between Charles II. and Louis XIV. prepared and concluded behind their backs exposed them to a double attack, under the weight of which it seemed inevitable that they should be crushed.

Faithless to his engagements with the republic, Charles II. had made the first advances towards France. They were at first coldly received. Louis XIV., distrusting the discretion of the King of England, hesitated to confide to him his projects against the United Provinces, 'from fear that the secret might become only a stage aside, and might soon cross the sea to find out those who ought least to be acquainted with it.' Upon the report, however, of his ambassador in London, the Marquis de Ruvigny, he saw that he might open his mind without fear, and he hastened to secure the treaty which he rightly called 'his great affair.' He entrusted this mission to the brother of the comptroller-general of the finances of the kingdom, the Marquis Colbert de Croissy, to whom he gave his instructions with injunctions of the strictest secrecy. The French plenipotentiaries were to offer to the King of England a league offensive and defensive, giving him to understand that the King of France might be inclined to make use of it against the United Provinces to punish them for having in the Triple Alliance failed in the obligations due from them to France. In order more surely to detach Charles from his alliance with

the republic, he was to inform him of the negotiations which the States-General had opened with the French Government, with a view to forcing the King of England to renounce the supremacy of the English flag in British waters. He was besides instructed to arouse his suspicions by persuading him that the States had transmitted to Louis proposals for the partition of the Netherlands, and thus falsely to represent them as disloyal to the Triple Alliance.

The inclinations of Arlington, who had always shown himself favourable to the United Provinces, fear of the national displeasure, and the necessity of treating Parliament with consideration in order to obtain subsidies, prolonged the hesitation of Charles, to the great annoyance of Louis XIV. At this time, the proposals hitherto interchanged between the two kings seemed about to take another course, and a change in the surrounding circumstances contributed to delay the final settlement. The Duke of York had renounced the Anglican faith, and after a course of instruction had been secretly received into the Roman Catholic Church. Obliged to conceal his conversion on account of the oppression exercised by Protestant intolerance on all those who were considered as papists or dissenters, he wished that Charles II. by openly following his example might enable him freely to profess his new belief. He hoped that, submitting to the royal authority, England would renounce the reformed religion as readily as she had embraced it. Charles II., who had no religious convictions, shared from political motives the sentiments of the Duke of York, and was impatient to execute the projects suggested by his brother. Their success appeared to him to depend upon the co-operation of the King of France, which he could not dispense with in order to free himself from the dependence in which he was held by his Parliament. Distrusting the Duke of Buckingham, whom he knew to be attached to Protestantism and hostile to the Duke of York, he thought it best to keep him in the dark, and preferred to take as his confidant Arlington, who had shown himself favourable to the Catholic religion, and whom he instructed to discover the secret to Louis XIV. While thus revealing to his minister his

ideas of conversion, the King of England found himself obliged at the same time to make known to him his projects of an alliance with Louis, the execution of which he could no longer delay, the King of France being less inclined than ever to let himself be deterred by religious interests from the political aim that he was pursuing with such ardour and perseverance. Up to this time Arlington had been in ignorance of the negotiations destined openly to destroy the Triple Alliance, as Charles thought him too much in favour of the cause of the United Provinces to have confidence in his co-operation. Flattered by his master's trust, and jealously eager to supplant the Duke of Buckingham, he now lent himself without scruple to the change in foreign policy required of him, and proved himself henceforward the devoted adherent of the French alliance.

According to his instructions Arlington was required to obtain from Louis XIV. a favourable reception for the pecuniary requirements of the King of England. Charles II. in fact was prepared to set a price upon his conversion as well as upon his alliance, and, under pretext of the service he should render to Louis XIV. by declaring himself a Catholic, wished to drive a bargain over his change of religion. His demands again endangered the agreement which had been arrived at. He required that the King of France should come to his assistance to make England Catholic, before engaging his kingdom in war with the United Provinces, and demanded, both for his conversion and for his military co-operation, subsidies amounting to 1,000,000*l*., which Louis refused to grant. Charles, however, soon lowered his demands, while on his side Louis recognised the necessity of humouring him.

The last difficulties were overcome by the journey to England of Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, sister of Charles II. Accustomed to receive the homage of a court of which she seemed to be the true queen, enjoying the favour of the king her brother-in-law, lauded to the skies first by Corneille and then by Racine, to whom she suggested his tragedy of 'Berenice,' Henrietta of Orleans was impatient to try her hand at politics, and Louis was happy to gratify her wishes. For some months past Charles had been inviting her to visit

England; and the King of France, who wished to turn her journey to account to bring to a conclusion the negotiations in hand, urged her to respond to his request. But the Duke of Orleans refused to permit her departure. Abandoned to the scandalous dissipations of a libertine existence, he had always neglected his young wife, and yet was jealous of her participation in public affairs as well as of the attachment shown for her by Louis XIV. Feeling himself humiliated by being kept in ignorance of negotiations confided to her, he very nearly insisted upon her remaining at home. Having with difficulty obtained the desired consent, she followed the King to Flanders, and afterwards proceeded to Calais, where she took ship. Before her departure she was placed in communication with Pomponne, the French ambassador at the Hague, whom Louis had sent for to initiate him in his secret policy. 'She asked,' writes Pomponne, 'for all the necessary information on the state of affairs in Holland, with which she seemed already well informed. I was surprised to find such intelligence and capacity for business in a youthful princess, who appeared born only for the graces that adorn her sex.'

Charles II. came down to Dover to receive his sister in state, with marks of the most tender affection. She persuaded him to postpone the declaration intended to announce his change of religion, and first to commence war upon the United Provinces. Ten days sufficed to settle definitively the conditions already accepted on either side, and the treaty containing them was privately signed by Arlington and the French ambassador on June 1, 1670. The King of England obtained from the King of France as the price of his conversion a promise of assistance to the amount of 80,000*l*. He bound himself on his side to commence hostilities against the States-General simultaneously with him, by furnishing his ally with a reinforcement of 4,000 men and fifty ships of war, for which a subsidy of 120,000*l*. was to be paid to him. In consideration of this payment he was to content himself with having assigned to him Walcheren, Sluys, and the island of Cadsand from the conquests made in the United Provinces. A present of 8,000 crowns was offered to Arlington, who received express

commands from Charles II. to accept it. The King of France did not confine himself to the pecuniary largesses lavished upon his royal ally. He knew that the love of pleasure was equally potent with the King of England, and to gain him more securely to his cause he was not ashamed to send with the Duchess of Orleans one of her most attractive maids-of-honour, Mademoiselle de Kerouaille. She was charged to ingratiate herself with Charles II., and acquitted herself of her task so well, that she superseded Lady Castlemaine in his favours, and became almost immediately his recognised mistress with the title of Duchess of Portsmouth. The alliance of France and England against the United Provinces was concluded with every precaution necessary for secrecy, and the festivities of a dissolute court allowed the enemies of the republic to surround with an impenetrable mystery the iniquitous bargain to which the United Provinces were to be sacrificed.

Hardly had the agreement been signed, before a tragic event almost broke it off. A week after her return from England, the Duchess of Orleans, in the bloom of youth and the flush of success in her mission, was carried off in a few hours in her palace at Saint-Cloud by an appallingly sudden death, whose tragic recollection has been preserved for us through all subsequent years by Bossuet's funeral oration. Accusations of poison soon spread, and fell upon the Chevalier de Lorraine, a declared enemy of the princess, who had obtained his exile in order to release the Duke of Orleans from the shameless rule of his favourite, and violent indignation was aroused in the English court. Irrefutable proofs of natural death were collected by the most careful investigation of the court of France, and have been confirmed by the researches of modern science, which, in the report of the post-mortem examination, and the contemporary accounts, discovers every sign of perforation of the intestines. But the proofs were not sufficient to dispel the painful suspicions of Charles II. and his ministers. The cloud, however, was only temporary, and the negotiations between the two courts were soon resumed.

Without repenting the treaty that he had just signed, Charles felt some embarrassment in communicating it to his ministers. He feared that the Duke of Buckingham, who was hostile to the Catholic party, might take offence, and that by his indiscretion he might arouse the alarms of the Protestants, of whom Parliament would not fail to make itself the mouthpiece. He accordingly urgently requested that a new treaty, the articles of which he might openly appeal to, should be substituted for that which had just been signed. He declared himself, however, none the less ready to confirm the clauses of the original convention with the exception of the change of religion, of which no mention was to be made. He was bent upon thus averting the suspicions of his most confidential advisers, and calculated upon profiting by fresh negotiations to obtain more advantageous conditions. Louis, in fact, 'not wishing,' as he wrote to his ambassador, 'to risk a shipwreck in the very harbour,' disposed of all difficulties by further concessions. Besides the command of both fleets being assigned to the Duke of York, he consented to allow precedence to the commander of the English auxiliary corps over the lieutenant-generals of his land forces. Charles II. moreover was not satisfied with increasing the share of booty reserved to England. He obtained a promise that besides the war subsidy which he was to receive, the sum of 80,000*l.* which was to be given to him for his conversion should be paid in the three months following the ratification of the treaty, under the name of extraordinary subsidies, without his being bound to fix the period he might choose for the announcement of his change of religion. Finally, in his intense desire for securities against the fresh negotiations which he was always fearing between France and the United Provinces, he required from Louis XIV. a pledge to open the campaign at the very beginning of the year 1672. These conventions having been signed after circumlocutions which several times endangered their conclusion, an ostensible though still secret treaty concluded in London replaced that which had been signed at Dover.

Charles II. thus sacrificed to blind, grasping, and hateful

passions the traditionary interests of his kingdom, which must of necessity be endangered by French aggrandisement on the Continent. He took no heed of the feelings of the English nation, which, from a love of civil freedom and from community of religion, was well disposed towards the republic of the United Provinces. In vain had he made Louis XIV. pledge himself to the observance of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle between France and Spain, attempting thus to secure the independence of the Netherlands, which was so precious to England. If once the United Provinces were conquered by the King of France, the Netherlands would then be wedged in between French possessions, and must sooner or later fall a prey to inevitable annexation. In vain did the ruin of the republic promise to gratify the commercial rivalry of England at the expense of the United Provinces. None the less would it destroy the naval power which could alone assist Charles II. to hold in check the domination of Louis XIV. over Europe. Thus in receiving the pay of the King of France to attack the United Provinces, Charles had good reasons for making difficulties with his ally. Louis in fact would reap all the benefits of the alliance.

The States-General had been kept in ignorance of the agreement between the two kings which was so threatening to their independence. The usually clear perception of the Grand Pensionary of Holland had been foiled by the pacific assurances which the ambassador of the United Provinces in England had been pleased to accredit. Too easily convinced by the declarations of the English minister, Van Beuningen announced to the States that there could be no danger to them in the Duchess of Orleans' journey. His confidence was increased by the death of that unfortunate princess. 'The kindly feelings that people had for France on account of the Duchess of Orleans,' he writes, 'will not to all appearance be continued. I have therefore good hopes that, before long, the English will have rather advanced towards us than drawn back.' The Grand Pensionary was reassured by these despatches. 'I cannot suppose,' he writes, 'such open perfidy on the part of the King of France as would be a rupture with-

out cause, and still less can I admit the idea of a treaty, and above all of a league with England.' In his correspondence with his brother-in-law, Deutz, he expresses his sentiments in language more homely but still more forcible: 'The news sent to us from France on the subject of an offensive league between France and England,' he writes, 'is in my opinion as far from the truth as the east is from the west.' His illusions, encouraged by those of Van Beuningen, were not yet dispelled.

It was not, however, for want of information. Hardly had the Triple Alliance been concluded, than the States of Holland received from Rome an anonymous letter, in which they were informed 'that they were threatened with a speedy turn of affairs by the union of England and France, who were concerting together for the reinstatement of the Prince of Orange.' A few months after this warning, De Groot, the Dutch ambassador in Sweden, writes to De Witt 'that the King of France will not fail to revenge himself on the United Provinces for having been forced to make peace with Spain, and that in especial he will omit nothing that can ruin their commerce, even to the extent of making a reciprocal treaty to that effect with the King of England.' According to the advice given to him by the Chancellor, Magnus de la Gardie, 'it was necessary to keep a watch on the movements of England, who was being much pressed by France, and to be suspicious of a naturally jealous and fickle nation and of a king who to all appearance was more inclined to Papistry than to Protestantism.' Later on the envoy of the States at Madrid gave them warning, on the information of the Queen-Regent of Spain, 'of the great intimacy of the French and English ministers in London and Paris, which they took so little trouble to conceal, that at a banquet they had drunk to the success of the armies of France and England, congratulating themselves on the annihilation of the Triple Alliance.' Finally still more direct communications had at least aroused suspicions of the negotiations which had been secretly conducted by the Duchess of Orleans. The Dutch ambassador in France had in fact received important revelations from a member of her suite, Mademoiselle de

Montalais, 'a young lady of good family and very clever,' who had long been mixed up with all the court intrigues. Her information, 'which taught him many things that he could not have known without her,' had opened his eyes sufficiently to enable him to assure De Witt that there was between the two kings 'not merely negotiations for an alliance, but an alliance already concluded.'

The Grand Pensionary, though he did not share his fears, could not remain unmoved by them, and communicated his tardy apprehensions to the ambassadors of the States. He did not conceal from himself the danger to which the States-General might be exposed by the abandonment of England, and had too much perspicacity not to have foreseen for some months past, that in the event of Louis XIV. in the face of all treaties attacking either the Netherlands or the United Provinces, 'there would be nothing to hope for from Charles II. notwithstanding all his pledges.' But his fears did not extend beyond a malevolent neutrality. He had no dread of the dangerous coalition with which the republic was now menaced. 'In France,' he writes to Boreel, 'it is said that England is completely won; you should therefore ascertain if King Charles has promised not to come to the assistance of our republic in case we cannot prevent France from attacking us and revenging herself upon us for the Triple Alliance.'

It was indeed the Triple Alliance which the republic was about to expiate. She was to pay dearly for the too great part she had played. Having humbled England by the treaty of Breda after a naval war, the States-General had thought that they might become the arbiters of Europe by allying themselves with their old enemy against France. But they had not foreseen that Charles and Louis might sacrifice their mutual resentment to a common work of vengeance which would be fatal to the United Provinces. They had allied themselves to England as to a free country which would be quite capable, if need were, of forcing her king to remain the ally of the United Provinces, without foreseeing that the king, by the aid of French subsidies, might free himself from all subjection to his Parliament, and thus change at his pleasure the

course of English policy. On the other hand, after incurring the implacable enmity of Louis XIV. by the opposition they had offered to his plans of conquest, they had too easily persuaded themselves that they could prevent him from punishing the offence of which they were guilty towards him, or that they could succeed in obtaining forgiveness. They had no suspicions of the steps the King of France was preparing to take, to make them repent of what Louis in his royal pride called 'the swaggering of these fishermen.' 'To all appearance their star is beginning greatly to pale,' writes the French ambassador at the Hague with unrestrained delight, 'and many clouds are forming, from which thunder may shortly be expected.'

Having saved the independence of the Spanish Netherlands, which they thought necessary to their own security, the United Provinces now found themselves threatened with invasion and conquest. Hardly three years after Spain had owed her safety to them, they were to be reduced to the impossibility of any longer protecting and saving themselves. The military and diplomatic successes which had secured them the highest rank among the powers of Europe, and in which De Witt had had so large a share, were but the prelude to misfortunes of which the Grand Pensionary was to be both witness and victim.

CHAPTER X.

RUPTURE OF PEACE AT HOME AND ABROAD—DESTRUCTION OF JOHN DE WITT'S WORK.

Position of home affairs—Awakening of the Orange party— Youth and education of the Prince of Orange—His character—His ambition—His journey to Zealand—His nomination as premier noble of that province—His coming of age—Measures of resistance taken by the States of Holland—Intimidation of the Orange party—Policy of John de Witt—Agreement between the States of Holland and the States of Zealand—The Act of Harmony accepted by the provinces of Friesland and Groningen—Symptoms of division in Holland—Rivalry of Beverningh, Fagel, and Van Beuningen with the Grand Pensionary De Witt—The question of the entrance of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State again brought forward—Deliberation of the States of Holland as to the vote to be allowed him—Differences in their Assembly—De Witt tardily bestirs himself to put an end to them—The Prince of Orange admitted to the Council of State—His fruitless attempt to obtain the right of sitting in the States-General—Resignation of the Commissioners entrusted with his education—Advances made to him by Louis XIV. and Charles II.—His journey to England—Encouragement given by Charles II. to his partisans—De Witt refuses to countenance it—The two parties prepare to renew the struggle—Position of affairs abroad—Hatred of Louis XIV. to the United Provinces—His measures of repression towards their commerce—De Groot appointed ambassador to France—His negotiations—Louis XIV. refuses to give any satisfaction—Commercial reprisals exercised by the States-General—Resentment of Louis XIV.—De Witt disposed to assume the offensive—Illusions kept up by De Groot—Pomponne recalled from the Hague—Vain endeavours of the States-General to effect a reconciliation—Their letter to the King of France—De Groot admitted to an audience—Reply of Louis XIV.—A rupture imminent—Dissimulation of the King of England—Pacific assurances given by Van Beuningen on his return from his embassy to London—De Witt deceived by them—He advises a policy of conciliation—Loyalty of the Grand Pensionary to the Triple Alliance—Charles II. evades the negotiations—He reveals his designs—Final recall of Temple—Encounter of a yacht belonging to the King of England with the Dutch fleet—Claims of Charles II. to the saluting of his flag—Sir George Downing appointed ambassador to the Hague—Suspension of payments by the Exchequer—Prorogation of Parliament—Increasing demands of Charles II.—Downing leaves the Hague—Last negotiations—Charles II. refuses to continue them—His defection.

The Grand Pensionary's work was threatened on all sides. Abroad, a most dangerous coalition was being concerted

against the republic, whilst the guarantees which had seemed to secure peace at home were powerless to insure its duration. By combining with England against France to protect the independence of the United Provinces, De Witt had renewed the hopes of the Orange party. When the States-General had replaced the alliance of Louis XIV. by that of Charles II. the partisans of a restoration had in fact easily persuaded themselves that the consequence must be the accession to power of the King of England's nephew, the young Prince of Orange, and full of confidence in an approaching change of government they accordingly set to work again. The Perpetual Edict which abolished the office of stadtholder in the province of Holland and made it incompatible with that of captain- and admiral-general had not discouraged them, and they were only watching for a favourable moment to take their revenge. 'I learn,' writes Lionne to the French ambassador, D'Estrades, 'that great cabals are already forming against the authority of Monsieur de Witt, with the purpose of overthrowing it.'

'The House of Orange,' according to Wicquefort, 'had retained the attachment of all those who, finding themselves kept out of office and employment, hoped to be restored to them by the advancement of the Prince; and his enemies, who were called the protectors of freedom, had not had either the strength or the wisdom to destroy so powerful a faction.' Friesland and Groningen had remained the more faithful to him that they had retained as stadtholder the young son of their former governor William Frederick of Nassau, and among the other provinces there was not one in which he could not reckon upon the support of numerous defenders. Zealand, from rivalry with Holland, seemed most disposed openly to espouse the cause of the heir of the former stadtholders of the republic. The Councillor-Pensionary of that province, Peter de Huybert, was ambitious to assume the leadership of the Orange party, and thus to put himself forward as a rival to the Grand Pensionary of Holland, who had so long been acknowledged as the chief of the republican party. The clergy also, who could not forget the services rendered to the reformed

religion by the Princes of Orange, continued to give to the son of William II. the support of their voices, and unceasingly attacked the ingratitude of the States of Holland. Notwithstanding all threats of censorship and repression, the pulpit remained a platform for the Opposition.

The policy of conciliation which the Grand Pensionary flattered himself he had successfully carried out, was to miscarry by the act of the Prince of Orange himself. Arrived at the age of eighteen, he was impatient to establish what he considered his rights. Although educated in the school of adversity from his earliest infancy, he had never lost belief in his fortune notwithstanding all adverse appearances. Against the obstacles opposed to his elevation he had early commenced a struggle which he carried through unflinchingly and from which he finally issued victorious. Grandson of the unfortunate Charles I. and nephew of the Pretender, who had wandered over Europe from one refuge to another, he had from his infancy been exposed to the persecutions of Cromwell, who, by insisting upon the Act of Exclusion, had closed to him the road to power. He had moreover been sacrificed to the resentment of the republican party, which had been so rashly provoked by the last stadtholder in his attempted coup d'état. Born a week after his father's death, and never recognised as heir to his father's power, the sole guardians of his cradle had been two women, his mother and his grandmother. Neither of them had done any real service to his cause. His mother, both proud and shy, had never gained favour with the public. His grandmother had injured him by her intrigues. In later years the restoration of Charles II. to the English throne had renewed in his favour the prestige of royal relationship, and the urgent recommendation in favour of his nephew which the new king hastened to address to the States of Holland, had seemed the signal for a speedy restoration of the stadtholdership. But the war entered into by Charles with the United Provinces, in which the complicity of the Orange party with the King of England was made manifest, had soon aroused suspicions of the Prince of Orange, by giving rise to fears that his family connections might make him subservient to English

policy. Nothing remained to him but the renown of the services rendered by his ancestors; but in the critical moment when the independence of a nation is at stake, the charm of such recollections is far more powerful, even in republics, than the fear of princely ambition.

The popular fame of his origin had kept up the hopes of his partisans as well as the fears of his enemies. Cromwell himself seems to have foreseen the irresistible force that he would gather from it, and had predicted to the Dutch ambassador Beverningh 'that this William, the son of the late king's daughter, would increase constantly in greatness.' According to the witness of a French gentleman, who lived at the court of the Princess-Dowager and who draws a portrait of the young prince at the age of sixteen, 'his carriage, his features, and his glance bore witness that through his maternal grandfather and grandmother, Charles I. and Henrietta Maria of France, he was of kin to the two greatest kings in the world.' Delicate and even somewhat weakly, in consequence of his rapid growth, sickly in appearance but gifted with a natural energy which enabled him to inure himself to the hardships of a campaign, William of Orange bore all the outward signs of a princely origin. A boldly curved aquiline nose, and an ample forehead shaded by thick curling brown hair, gave a very marked character to his face. His mouth, merely indicated by thin compressed lips, testified to uncommon strength of will. His piercing glance revealed the fire within; its brilliancy remained to the last, and in after years the Duke of Berwick, when brought before him as a prisoner, said 'that he recognised him at once by his eagle eye.' His education had prepared him to profit by the chances of fortune which the future held in store for him. From it he obtained the strong bent of religious belief to which he remained faithfully attached all his life, and to which he owed the vocation he believed to be his, that of personifying in himself the defence of Protestantism. The instruction which he received and the good examples set before him familiarised him from his earliest years with a strictness of conduct which preserved him from all youthful follies, and even brought upon him the

reproach of unsociability. Gaming, frivolous conversation, and the excesses of the table, so opposed to his sober tastes, kept him aloof from the world. His natural reserve and taciturn gravity made him a stranger to the amusements of his age. If he went out in the evening at the Hague, 'he left the party,' writes Gourville, 'at half-past eight.' Hunting was his only amusement, to which he added afterwards the love of war. He felt himself to be made for action. The austere regularity of his life justified, by the example it offered, the advice that he gave to the youths around him. At the age of fourteen he writes in French to Baron Freisheim, an ensign in the army, 'I fear that you may have become a rake, since while in my service you were so already, and now that you are left to yourself I am afraid that you may give yourself up to dissipation entirely. I can assure you, however, that you will repent one day. I conjure you to keep good company, for if you fall into bad you will be utterly spoiled. If you do not as far as possible follow my advice you shall never possess my friendship, but if you do I will love you greatly and will seek occasion to show you that I am your very good friend.'

Although some writers have asserted that his education was neglected, he had profited by the pains taken with him by his first tutor, Frederick of Nassau, Lord of Zuylestein, but had never acquired any extensive knowledge of science, letters, or history. The study of languages was the only one that seemed to please him. He spoke equally well Dutch, French, English, and German, and understood Spanish, Italian, and Latin, so that he was able, as he grew up, to maintain intimate relations with the foreign ministers at the Hague. By this means he was initiated into the policy of the different courts of Europe, and acquired in his youth that knowledge of diplomacy which he afterwards turned to such good account. 'From time to time,' writes Saint Evremond in 1665, 'we go to pay our respects to the prince, who would have reason to complain of me if I said no more than that rarely has a person of his quality shown such intelligence at his age.'

The States of Holland, on assuming the direction of his

education, had undertaken to complete it. He profited by the instructions given to him under their auspices and superintended by the Grand Pensionary himself with scrupulous regularity, and owned later how much he had gained in this intimate intercourse with a great statesman who reserved to himself the political education of his pupil. The pupil in after days did honour to his master, excepting in the ingratitude with which alone he rewarded him. If he did not leave John de Witt's hands transformed into a great citizen, he at least received from the First Minister of the republic those precepts and examples of loyalty to his country which made him a prince among a thousand.

His character was superior even to his intellect, and in adversity he acquired a precocious maturity of judgment. Not being by nature timorous, as he proudly declared in later years to Arlington, but concealing vehement passions under an impassible exterior; inheriting from his father the Dutch phlegm and from his mother the English practical good sense; he was gifted with an obstinate perseverance that made him impervious to all discouragement. He was likely to justify the prediction of Count d'Estrades, who had said that if the heir of the House of Orange lived to manhood he might be expected to make a great stir, and 'that quite possibly might be seen revived in him his ancestors—William the Silent, Maurice, and Frederick Henry.'

D'Estrades had seen, in the dispute for the precedence of their carriages at Voorhout, how bent upon maintaining the privileges of his birth was the young prince and how ready always to assert them. Deprived as he was of all authority, he could not resign himself to not being treated as the principal personage in the State. When the army had been assembled on the Flemish frontier, he had insisted, against the advice given to him, on repairing to the camp at Bergen-op-Zoom. But the officers had been forbidden to receive him with military honours, and at the dinner to which he was invited by De Noortwijck, the Master-General of Ordnance, he had been placed below the deputies of the States. The Prince took offence and refused to call upon them. In order to obtain

possession of power he was ready to attempt anything, but would risk nothing; pausing if necessary, but only to resume more surely his onward progress, and steadily pursuing his designs, while he was skilful enough to conceal them. His habit of concealing his feelings, which is mentioned by Count d'Estrades, who adds that he would turn it to account for his own ends, arose from the distrust which had become habitual to him in his daily life. Forced to impose restraint upon himself before his mother and grandmother, who had disputed his early education between them; obliged in his youth to exercise the same restraint towards the States of Holland when he had been placed under their guardianship; he had kept a watch over his words and actions which had accustomed him to allow nothing to be discovered of what was in his mind. While still very young he gave a remarkable example of this, in the year 1668, which has been carefully reported in his memoirs by an eye-witness, Gourville, one of the best of the French diplomatic agents. The Prince of Orange, whose good graces Gourville had succeeded in obtaining, was conversing familiarly with him one day in his palace and expressing his irritation against De Witt, to whom he attributed the Perpetual Edict, when the latter was suddenly announced. The Prince went forward to meet the Grand Pensionary without any embarrassment, and thanked him with a smiling countenance for having done what he could in his interests. 'When the Prime Minister had retired,' says Gourville, 'I approached the young Prince and looked him straight in the face, as if to give him a glance of meaning without being seen by the others. He told me afterwards that he had been quite aware of what I wished him to see. We agreed that he ought to act thus until the time came when he might be able to adopt a different course. I told him laughingly that he knew a great deal for his age.'

It was the more easy for the Prince of Orange to encourage a belief in his resignation to his present position, since he had neither the virtues nor the vices fitted to win popular favour. His silence, his economy, his apparent timidity, his strictness of life, seemed to forbid popularity. Neither did he appear

inclined to seek it, and those who were interested in his cause felt some anxiety on this account. 'The affection which the populace preserve for him,' writes Pomponne, 'requires to be entertained by affability, liberality, and attentions. Greater readiness for showing himself, for talking to all sorts of people, even for intercourse with women—who in Holland more than in any other place in the world have power with their husbands—would certainly be of much advantage to him.' But it was not necessary for him to make any effort to please. He was loved without any advances being required from him, and gratitude to his ancestors sufficed to pave the way to an inevitable restoration in his favour, hastened by events which made him not only the ruler but the saviour of the United Provinces. His ambition was thus to be justified by the patriotic work towards whose accomplishment he used his power.

At the moment when he was about to take upon himself the leadership of his party, the difficulty of his task seemed increased by the lack of good advisers. When, at the age of ten, the death of the Princess-Royal had left him an orphan, he had kept aloof from the Princess-Dowager, against whom his mother had prejudiced him in consequence of the misunderstandings which had always divided them. He could not forgive his grandmother the part which she was suspected to have played in the restitution of the principality of Orange to the King of France, and he never showed any affection towards her. His indifference appears from the letter of gentle reproach that she afterwards addressed to him on the occasion of his being appointed stadtholder: 'I must complain of you,' she writes to him, 'that you never tell me a word of what happens to you;' and she adds: 'You know that there is no one in the world who loves you so dearly as I do. You may suppose how greatly this afflicts me, but I will not cease to love you and pray God for you, and I shall die, my dear son, your very faithful grandmother, Amelia, Princess of Orange.'

The young Prince had placed his confidence in his tutor, Frederick of Nassau, his father's illegitimate brother. But the latter had been dismissed by the States of Holland, who were

suspicious of the power he wielded, and Van Ghent, the new tutor appointed, had incurred the Prince's dislike. He needed a confidant, and chose for that purpose William van Odyk, the son of his mother's most trusty adviser, Louis of Nassau, Lord of Beverwaert, whom the Stadtholder Maurice had acknowledged as his natural son. Odyk, after a dissipated youth spent in Paris, had returned to the United Provinces, obtained the command of a troop of cavalry, and married a rich woman in Zealand. His connections gave him consequence, and his powers of intellect enabled him to do good service. 'He will do more harm than you can imagine,' writes Bampfield, one of the Grand Pensionary's constant correspondents, 'on account of his talents—which are such that I think there can be none greater—and his subtlety of mind and powers of judgment can only do mischief.' His skill in business secured him the confidence of the Prince, who was too restricted in his surroundings to be able freely to choose his friends. Odyk prepared the way for his appearance, and artfully contrived a favourable opportunity for the ward of the States of Holland to play the part of a pretender.

His hopes of dominion foiled by the Perpetual Edict, the son of the late Stadtholder had resolved, as soon as he was eighteen, to claim the inheritance of his fathers. No attempt even being possible in Holland, he chose Zealand as the place whence to give his partisans the first signal for a restoration. The States of that province had conferred upon him some years previously, as Marquis of Ter-Veer and Flushing, the dignity of premier noble, which made him the representative of the nobility of that province. As soon as his age permitted him to exercise this privilege, he took steps to assume it publicly. Closely guarded by De Witt, who considered himself responsible for the education he received, and who never passed a day without visiting him, he could not quit the Hague unless he could elude the vigilance of the Grand Pensionary. The absence of his tutor, Van Ghent, favoured his projects. Whilst the latter was visiting his estate in Guelders, the Prince of Orange wrote to him, and sent word at the same time to the Grand Pensionary, that he was going

to Breda, pretexting a hunting party for the sake of trying some hounds and hawks that had been sent to him by the King of England. But instead of stopping at Breda he continued his route to Bergen-op-Zoom, where a boat was waiting to carry him to Zealand. The Princess-Dowager, who had concocted this journey with her grandson, had summoned from Cleves Prince John Maurice of Nassau, that he might take the Prince under his protection, as she feared the impetuosity of the young nobles who accompanied him. But the Prince of Nassau, after joining him at Breda, remained at Bergen-op-Zoom under pretence of illness, fearing to compromise himself by following him farther and sharing in his audacious undertaking.

Arrived at Rammekens, the Prince of Orange desired his Master of the Household to announce his arrival to the States of the province assembled in session at Middleburg, where his confidant Odyk had carefully superintended the preparations for his reception. Without hurrying himself he proceeded in his yacht to Middleburg, and at three o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, September 13, 1668, he made his entry into the harbour, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants. The magistrates of the town had come down to meet him, the burghers were in arms to receive him, and the ships dressed with flags answered the salute of his vessel by a triple discharge of their guns. He entered a coach drawn by six horses, and was conducted in state to the abbey, the former palace of his ancestors. Here the deputies of the States came to congratulate him; the councillor-pensionary of the province made a speech to him in their name, and the different representatives of the provincial government followed this example. 'Crowds are coming in from all sides,' writes the Prince's Master of the Household to the Princess-Dowager, 'the streets are nearly impassable, windows, roofs, even trees and masts, are black with spectators. The abbey is so full of people on foot and in carriages that it is hardly possibly to reach the Prince's apartment. The civic militia fired salutes in his honour during the two hours that he passed at the window, and there are to be fireworks all night.'

The next day the Prince, accompanied by a numerous suite, was conducted to the Hall of Assembly. The chair belonging to him as premier noble had been placed at the head of the table. He was requested to seat himself in it, and thus to assume the presidency of the assembly. His speech was a manifesto. After thanking the States for the loyalty which they had maintained towards him since the day of his birth, William continued: 'By conferring upon me to-day the dignity of premier noble, you have not confined the proofs of your affection to my person within the limits of your province, for you believed this to be a method of arousing in all the other provinces the sentiments which animate yourselves. The time fixed by you for my entrance upon office having arrived, I should not have considered myself to be making a fit response to your wishes if I had delayed taking possession of it. This is the motive that has brought me to your assembly.' He concluded his oration by renewing his promise to walk in the footsteps of his ancestors, 'to whom,' he said, 'no sacrifice had been too great for the preservation of the reformed religion.'

A triumphal progress followed the Prince's reception at Middleburg, to which he returned to obtain the acceptance of William van Odyk as his substitute. The powers that he exercised through the agency of his deputy insured him a preponderance of authority. As the delegate of the nobles who could only speak through his voice, and possessing besides the votes of the two towns of Flushing and Ter-Veer which he held in fief, the Prince could henceforth dispose of three votes in the assembly of the province. As this only consisted of seven members, the nobles counting as one, besides the deputies of six towns, he needed now only to gain a single vote to be secure of a majority, and to be in fact master of the States of Zealand. Thus the dignity of the premier noble bestowed upon the son of William II. seemed destined to pave the way to a speedy re-establishment of the stadtholdership in Zealand. The clergy of Middleburg were already proposing in their consistory to send a deputation to the provincial States representing the necessity of electing a stadtholder, and

threatened to address their remonstrances to the people if they did not obtain a favourable decision. The opposition of a few deputies sufficed, indeed, to check this measure, but a change of government was none the less evidently impending.

To enable her grandson to profit by any such change, the Princess-Dowager determined to bring his minority to an end, dispensing with the intervention of the States of Holland, and paying no attention to the authority over his education which still belonged to them. Having obtained the consent of his two uncles, the King of England and the Elector of Brandenburg, she solemnly delivered to him the deed by which he was declared of age, and notified it to the States-General and the States of Holland. The Grand Pensionary was inclined to consider this determination as the signal for a rupture, notwithstanding the pacific declarations to which the Princess-Dowager was careful to have recourse. The bold stroke so successfully played by the Prince of Orange seemed moreover to be a sufficient announcement of his intention of assuming the part of pretender. De Witt saw that he had been fooled by a boy of eighteen, whose apparent docility had deceived him. His anxiety is betrayed in his letters. Writing to Valkenier, the burgomaster of Amsterdam, he alludes covertly to 'the necessity of concerting measures for the preservation of such dearly purchased freedom.'

While this change of scene was being so rapidly accomplished, the internal rivalries and jealousies in the Assembly of the States of Holland were being with difficulty restrained by the authority of the Grand Pensionary, which was enfeebled rather than strengthened by his long exercise of power. De Witt was no longer the undisputed ruler of the assembly. 'From the advices I have lately received,' writes the French ambassador Pomponne, 'I gather that there is some secret agitation at work against the Grand Pensionary, and that there is some talk of requiring an account of his administration, even of the 12,000 florins which he receives yearly for secret service.' 'The bottom of all this,' writes the English ambassador Temple, 'is the same with that of all popular humours; that is, a design in the leaders to change the scene, that so

those who have been long employed may make room for those who have been long out.'

The adversaries of John de Witt demanded that the conduct of foreign affairs should be confided to another minister, and that his office should be divided on account of the overpressure of work which he had to attend to. This attack was too direct to be successful, and the proposal fell to the ground. It was by more circuitous methods that it was now resolved to strike a blow at his authority. Thus he was indirectly censured in the matter of 'The Political Maxims of Holland,' a work to which he had anonymously contributed, by himself composing two chapters. He had granted the concession to the publisher for a term of fifteen years, at the close of a sitting, at a moment when almost all the members of the assembly were absent. Five months afterwards, on the demand of several deputies, the assembly resolved to withdraw the concession as having been obtained under a misapprehension. The book, in which the author, Delacourt, set forth the policy of the republican party, in terms exceeding all limits of controversy and apparently intended to break all the ties which bound Holland to the other provinces, was prohibited under penalty of a fine of 600 florins, 'as injurious, calumnious, and detestable in many parts.' These blows dealt to De Witt were liable to be the more dangerous as they came from some of those who had long been considered his avowed partisans. While some faithful friends still remained to him, such as his kinsmen Vivien, Pensionary of Dordrecht, and De Groot, Pensionary of Rotterdam, the son of the celebrated Grotius, others, such as Beverningh, Fagel, and Van Beuningen, set the example of defection.

Beverningh had drawn nearer to the Orange party after his resignation of the office of treasurer-general during the second English war. The advances of the Grand Pensionary, who invited him to bring his wife to spend some days at the Hague and kept up a constant correspondence with him, had, it is true, induced him to undertake the negotiations which ended in the treaties of Breda and Aix-la-Chapelle; but De Witt had been unable to persuade him to return to England

and accept the embassy extraordinary that had been offered to him. In the following year Beverningh had almost yielded to the application of the Prince of Orange, who urged him to enter his service and undertake the management of his finances, promising him a salary of six or eight thousand crowns. 'Those who know,' writes Wicquefort, 'on what terms he has lived for some time with the First Minister did not doubt that he would finally pledge himself at the dinner which he gave last Saturday to the Prince and to Messieurs de Witt and Van Ghent in his house near Leyden. But it turned out quite otherwise, for the Prince having ridden thither in order to be able to converse with him before the arrival of the others, Monsieur Beverningh spoke out and refused to undertake that office.'

However that might be, the advances that had been made to him by the heir of the House of Orange had not been in vain. They deprived the republican party of one of its boldest champions, and one who had seemed irrevocably pledged to it by the part he had taken in the Act of Exclusion in 1653. Beverningh's disinterestedness, however, was greater than his ambition, and he never sought to take advantage of the restoration of the stadtholdership to turn to his own profit the favour which he had acquired with the Prince of Orange. Jealous of his independence, and having, in her days of trial, rendered all the services required of him to his country, he retired into private life after he had negotiated and concluded the treaty of Nimeguen in 1678, and from that time till his death took no further part in public affairs.

Fagel also, the pensionary of Haarlem, who had been the prime mover of the Perpetual Edict, and who had suggested, or rather forced it upon De Witt, declared himself openly in opposition to the Grand Pensionary. Even Noortwijck, one of the most avowed adversaries of the Orange party—'the only man besides De Witt,' says St. Evremond, 'who ventured boldly to pronounce the word "republic"'—was dissatisfied because the Grand Pensionary had prevented the admission of his second son-in-law among the nobles who sat in the Assembly of the States.

Worse than all, Van Beuningen, until now the confidant

of John de Witt, was seeking to become his rival. 'I am much mistaken if I have not discovered some estrangement between them, which arises perhaps from the jealousy usually inspired by divided authority,' writes Pomponne in February 1669. So far back as the year 1667, when he was still ambassador in ordinary in France, Van Beuningen had asked De Witt to associate him with himself in power. The Grand Pensionary had evaded the suggestion, and their friendship had cooled. 'A plurality of Cæsars cannot live together,' writes D'Estrades. According to the ambassador's report, Van Beuningen, supported by Beverningh, had canvassed the deputies of Holland to obtain a vacant troop of horse for a relation of his who was the lieutenant, while the Grand Pensionary supported the candidature of one of his own nephews. 'Their solicitations,' continued D'Estrades, 'were carried so far, that the deputies who were already pledged to De Witt let him know that they could not keep their word, as justice required that the troop should be given to the lieutenant.' Van Beuningen, on the other hand, at the risk of compromising the alliances of the republic, opposed the definitive nomination of Peter de Groot, the Grand Pensionary's most intimate friend, to the embassy at Stockholm. His conduct was the less excusable that he ought to have shown some gratitude to the son for the benefits that he had received from the father, the celebrated Grotius, who, when exiled from the United Provinces and acting as ambassador from Christina, Queen of Sweden, to the court of France, had been the patron of his younger days, he having gone through his apprenticeship in diplomacy with Grotius in Paris.

By now enrolling himself amongst the malcontents, Van Beuningen prepared the way for the new engagements he was about to enter into with the Orange party, to which indeed he was attached by the opinions he had professed on his first entrance into public life. But he was not destined to profit long by the success of a cause which he served with all the impetuous ardour of a neophyte. Entrusted, after the restoration of William III., with a fresh embassy to England, he opposed the warlike policy of the Prince of Orange after

the rupture of the peace of Nimeguen by Louis XIV., and thus fell into disgrace. The irregularities of his private life deprived him of that consideration which might have made the trials of public life more easy to endure at the close of his career. His pleasure-loving tastes caused him to maintain a little seraglio in his house at Blyenburg, adjoining one of the suburbs of the Hague, and late in life he married one of his mistresses, Johanna Bartolotti van den Heuvel. The commercial undertakings in which he had embarked did not answer his expectations, and his pecuniary losses completed the almost total wreck of his mind. He survived himself in a melancholy old age which could not have been predicted from his famous embassies, and died in 1693.

De Witt could not conceal from himself the danger of the rivalries and intrigues which threatened his power. He endeavoured to foil them by his moderation. Far from showing towards Van Beuningen any resentment for the hostility he had shown towards him, he offered him his services to assist in his election as burgomaster of Amsterdam; and, anxious to give no handle for the accusations of abuse of power brought against him, he left the appointment to vacant offices one after another in the hands of his enemies, in the hope of satisfying them. Thus the government of Sluys was given to La Leck, whose younger brother, Van Odyk, was the principal agent of the Orange party; and that of Bois-le-Duc to Kirkpatrick, the oldest infantry colonel in the army, and especially recommended by the Prince of Orange. De Witt abstained from opposing to their candidature the name of Major-General Wurtz, who possessed his entire confidence, and whose appointment would have been in his own interest.

He acted in the same manner with regard to the election of a new chief representative of the nobility of Holland in place of Wimmenum, who held also the important offices of president of the councillor-deputies of Holland and bailiff and dyckgrave—or superintendent of roads and bridges—of Rhynlandt, the combined salaries of which amounted to 20,000 florins. An equitable compromise was arrived at through the intervention of the Grand Pensionary. De Witt satisfied

himself with obtaining the appointment to the presidency of the board of councillor-deputies for Boetselaar, Baron of Asperen, who before entering the service of the Prince of Orange appeared to favour the republican party, and put forward no claim to the other vacant post which was bestowed upon a candidate pledged to the party in opposition. Having, by this policy of compromise, preserved unimpaired the union of the States of Holland, he turned it to profit, in order to persuade them to lose no time in taking measures to guard against any fresh attempts on the part of the Prince of Orange. Fearing that the assumption by the latter of the functions of premier noble might be the prelude to the re-establishment of the stadtholdership in Zealand, the Grand Pensionary induced the States of Holland to pass a resolution, by which their deputies in the States-General were instructed to demand the addition of an article to the rules of the Council of State, prohibiting the admission of any stadtholder. The two provinces of Friesland and Groningen, who had kept the young Prince Henry Casimir of Nassau as their stadtholder, opposed a motion which they considered prejudicial to their interests and an attack upon the right of the provinces which might wish to restore the stadtholdership. The manifesto which they published did not, however, deter the States of Holland from declaring that they would allow no stadtholder to take his seat in the Council of State without the preliminary consent of the confederated provinces.

This skilful show of firmness was successful. It had been made easy by the harmony which De Witt had been careful to cultivate in the province. With this object in view, he had happily terminated a dispute which had long divided North and South Holland concerning the share to be paid of the provincial subsidies, which he caused to be lowered from twenty to eighteen and a quarter per cent. for North Holland. Having no fear of dissensions in their own assembly, the States of Holland were able to insure respect for the integrity of their sovereign power, in the execution of the fiscal and domain laws applicable to the Prince of Orange. When once his partisans had recognised the impossibility of overcoming

the resistance offered to them, they understood that a conciliatory policy would be of more service to the Prince, and changed their tactics accordingly. They renounced the idea of his election as Stadtholder of Zealand, and determined in the first place to get him admitted into the Council of State.

The Princess-Dowager, well used to dissimulation, was the first to adopt these views, and soon overcame the doubts of her grandson. The King of England shared her opinion, and his minister Arlington writes to Sir William Temple : 'His Majesty inclines much to the Prince's contenting himself with a little ; and such a little, if it be so, as you have specified, rather than run the hazard of losing the whole.' This plan of campaign could not, however, be successful so long as the unanimous consent of the provinces had not been obtained to the Act of Harmony, which had imposed as the condition of the admission of the Prince of Orange to the Council of State, the division of the civil and military offices, that of captain- and admiral-general and that of stadtholder. As yet the three provinces most devoted to the House of Orange, Zealand, Friesland, and Groningen, had refused their assent. To induce them to give way it was necessary first to reconcile Holland and Zealand.

Assured of the co-operation of the Princess-Dowager, De Witt set to work with skill and perseverance at this labour of reconciliation. He took advantage of the rivalry that had declared itself between William van Odyk, the Prince's substitute in his capacity of premier noble, and Peter de Huybert, Councillor Pensionary of Zealand, who could not forgive the Prince of Orange for not having made choice of him as his delegate. Having won his good-will by well-chosen attentions, De Witt prepared the way for an agreement between the two provinces by bringing to an end the discussions that had been raised on the subject of their courts of justice—the provincial court and the grand council, which were common to both provinces. Their constant dissension had lately been revived over the choice of a president for the provincial court when the turn of presidency fell to Zealand.[1] In order not to lose

[1] The presidency was allowed three times in succession to Holland before reverting to Zealand.

it, Holland had left the post vacant, causing the office to be filled temporarily by the senior councillor, Dorp de Maasdam. Unable longer to postpone a definitive appointment, they now demanded a change of system by which a compromise might be effected.

The two provinces agreed that each should have its separate provincial court, but preserved the grand council for both, to sit in appeal in civil cases, and as a court of error in criminal proceedings. The States of Holland took advantage of this arrangement to dispose of the presidency of the provincial court in favour of Pauw, Lord of Bennebroeck, who had been recommended to them by the order of nobles, and who did little to justify in after days this mark of their confidence. The measures mutually agreed to for the reorganisation of the courts of justice paved the way for an agreement in politics. While signifying their assent to them, the States of Zealand, by the advice of the Princess-Dowager, themselves proposed to the States of Holland the division of the functions of stadtholder and captain-general, in consideration of the immediate admission of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State. They thus subscribed the Act of Harmony, which had been kept for two years in suspense by their opposition.

Anxious not to leave their task incomplete, the States of Holland undertook the conversion of the two last dissentient provinces, Friesland and Groningen. The latter resisted, not choosing to shut out their stadtholder in the future from the post of captain-general. They reproached the Princess-Dowager for having deserted their cause, and one of the deputies of Friesland made himself the mouthpiece of their remonstrances in the following words: 'Everyone to whom I have spoken,' he writes, 'expresses the greatest astonishment that the Prince should seem thus inclined to allow a project which formerly was considered so iniquitous; and your Highness, who has so enlightened a mind, may easily judge, if by consenting to this the two provinces of Friesland and Groningen would not be committing a flagrant injustice, and if your Highness can with propriety favour a business so prejudicial

to the Prince, your grandson, and which you formerly so strenuously opposed.'

The union of Zealand with Holland, however, disheartened the provinces of Friesland and Groningen. They gave way, and after long hesitation, at the beginning of the following year, March 1670, gave their consent in writing to the division of the two offices. The States-General immediately demanded that the necessary measures should be taken to arrange without delay for the admission of the Prince into the Council of State. The condition upon which his entrance had been made to depend, had in fact been fulfilled. The States of Holland had now obtained the satisfaction they required, and there seemed nothing left but for themselves to fulfil their engagements. The work of pacification which they had undertaken appeared to be accomplished, but they were about to imperil and destroy it while weakening their own power by rashly provoked dissensions.

The Grand Pensionary had too easily persuaded himself that he might continue to depend upon their indissoluble union, although he had himself foretold its fragility. 'I find so much weakness in our own body, even at this favourable time,' he wrote to a friend the day after the passing of the Perpetual Edict, 'that I do not know what might happen in case of dissensions, nor what blows might fall on honest men.' He was not sufficiently on his guard against this danger. When the dissentient provinces had all been brought round to the Act of Harmony, instead of putting it at once into execution by securing the immediate admission of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State and thus giving him the satisfaction that had been promised, he allowed free course to discussions skilfully turned to account by his enemies, and to which he only put an end after too much delay. By them the States of Holland were divided into two opposite factions, unforeseen allies were secured to the Orange party, and the republicans were disarmed.

On the day when the States-General registered the consent of the last provinces that had opposed the Act of Harmony, the resolution sanctioning this convention and admitting the

Prince of Orange into the Council of State was suddenly thrown into uncertainty. Before putting it to the vote De Werkendam, the deputy of Holland who was presiding over the Assembly, required that it should be submitted to the provincial states, and the latter decided that it was necessary to proceed to a fresh debate. The next day the deputies of the States-General expressed their surprise, and protested against any adjournment. The deputies of Holland represented to them that there still remained to be settled some questions not yet decided; and the Grand Pensionary, to induce them to have patience, assured them that the States of the province, in order to hasten the passing of the motion, had already referred it to a small committee of the Assembly composed of Boutermantel, one of the deputies of Amsterdam, who drew up a daily report of the sittings, the manuscript of which has fortunately been preserved,[1] Fagel, pensionary of Haarlem, and the deputy of the town of Hoorn. They were instructed to consult with the members representing Holland in the Council of State.

They had to determine the allowance, the seat, and the vote to be granted to the Prince. The amount of the allowance, which some wished to make as high as 100,000 florins, was by others reduced to 25,000 florins. The next question was whether the Prince was to sit in the arm-chair in which his ancestors had taken their places as stadtholders of the province, or whether he should content himself with an ordinary chair. Finally, the right of voting in the Council of State gave rise to divisions of opinion still less easy to reconcile. The Prince's champions claimed for him a decisive vote, whilst his adversaries wished to allow him only the right of discussion.

The Prince of Orange believed himself to be secure of the vote. The Grand Pensionary had long before assured him, 'that this was his wish, and that he was persuaded it was that of his masters.' But when the Prince reminded him of his engagement, De Witt replied that matters had greatly

[1] This MS., from which all the details of this account are taken, belongs now to the Roogards collection at Utrecht.

changed since then, as the Prince had had himself proclaimed premier noble of Zealand in a manner of which the States of Holland could not approve. He thus imprudently renewed differences which had seemed settled, and which it was important to avoid.

The contest began in the first debate in the assembly of the States of Holland, and the concord which had hitherto made them masters of the government of the United Provinces was irretrievably destroyed. The deputies of Dordrecht, represented by the Pensionary Vivien, objected acrimoniously to the excess of power which the office of Councillor of State would give to the Prince of Orange, combined with his functions as premier noble of Zealand, and argued the necessity of taking some security. Haarlem, on the contrary, represented by its Pensionary Fagel and supported by the deputies of Alkmaar and Enckhuyzen, was strongly opposed to any show of want of confidence, and declared that a refusal to comply with the terms stipulated in the Act of Harmony in their integrity would call into question again the Perpetual Edict. The other members of the Assembly seemed disposed to try to come to an agreement.

The next day, March 27, 1670, the debate was renewed on the report of the committee. The Prince's allowance, fixed at 60,000 florins, was readily agreed to, at least provisionally. On the other hand, his partisans ceased to claim for him the right to occupy the seat of the stadtholders, and contented themselves with having a place of honour reserved for him. But the question of whether he was to vote proved an obstacle to a good understanding. The report was in favour of it, but this proposal met with obstinate opposition. The nobles argued as follows: The vote allowed to the Prince, they said, would give too much power in the Council of State to Zealand, who would thus dispose of a double vote: that of her ordinary deputy and that of the Prince, who by his appointment as premier noble of that province had become their official representative. The estates belonging to the Prince in the Country of the Generality, of which the council of State was the administrator, the influence given to him by his birth, his

relationship with the King of England and to the Elector of Brandenburg, appeared so many reasons for granting him for the present only limited authority. The majority of the Assembly seemed to agree with this opinion. Three towns only declared themselves against it; these were Haarlem, Alckmaar, and Enckhuyzen. Haarlem declared it impossible to allow the Prince to sit in the Council of State 'as a figure of straw or cardboard,' and not succeeding in gaining their cause, demanded that the deputies should ask instructions from the town councils.

This adjournment, which was intended to be favourable to the interests of the Prince of Orange, appeared, however, to him to offer a fresh obstacle to his hopes. In his impatience he wished to take advantage at once of the prorogation of the States of Holland to persuade the States-General to decide the question by a majority of votes, saying to his confidants 'that he should take his seat in the Council of State then or never.' The deputies even of the provinces the most devoted to him refused to proceed without receiving orders from the States of which they were only the delegates, and they were aware also that the unanimous consent of all the provinces was necessary for the admission of the Prince. One of the deputies of Guelders who had always been noted for his attachment to the Prince's party went even so far as to say, 'that if a majority of the provinces would suffice to admit the Prince into the Council of State, the vote of one alone might be sufficient to turn him out.'

Although they did not choose to join in the false step recommended to the Prince by his flatterers, the other provinces were none the less determined not to allow Holland any longer to deny him the prerogatives of his office, and accordingly refused to pay any attention to the representations addressed by De Witt to the Councillor-Pensionary of Zealand, and to Dykveldt, the deputy of Utrecht. They were still further encouraged by the disunion which continued to show itself among the deputies of Holland since the prorogation, and by the failure of the offers of a compromise sent by De Witt to Fagel suggesting, but in vain, that the Prince of Orange

should be admitted at once into the Council of State, provided that the question of the vote should be reserved.

In the next Assembly of the States of Holland, which was held three weeks after their last sitting, the Orange party saw with satisfaction that fresh forces were at its disposal by the aid of which victory was secure. Besides the town of Leyden, they had gained to their cause that of Amsterdam, whose defection the Grand Pensionary had vainly endeavoured to prevent by addressing an urgent appeal to the burgomaster Van Graeff. Amsterdam was at present entirely under the guidance of Van Beuningen, who from hostility to De Witt had become reconciled to the Prince of Orange. When called upon for an opinion that town accordingly joined with Haarlem, whose Pensionary, Fagel, was disposed to assume the position of chief of a party. The deputies of Amsterdam, therefore, supporting the vehement protestations of Fagel, and obeying the instructions given to them by the magistrates of the town, declared 'that the Prince of Orange, having no other authority than that of Councillor of State, could not be placed in a position inferior to that of the other members of the Council, and they hinted that the opinion of a city which was the principal strength of Holland ought to be allowed great weight.'

Their intervention made the debate still more stormy. It irritated the deputies of Delft, Dordrecht, and Rotterdam, who, giving free vent to the hostility they had until now kept within bounds, disputed the right of the Prince of Orange, before the completion of his twenty-second year, not merely to possess a vote, but even to offer an opinion. They asserted that the Prince ought to be admitted to the council only as a learner, and must begin by listening before he could learn anything. The president of the councillor-deputies, D'Asperen, summed up in these laconic terms the programme opposed to that of the deputies of Haarlem and Amsterdam. 'The less is given,' he said, 'the better it will be.' De Groot, pensionary of Rotterdam, in a direct attack upon the deputies of Amsterdam, distinguished himself by the vehemence of his opposition, and required that the Prince of Orange should first offer his

resignation as premier noble of Zealand. He pleaded the precautions which ought to be taken against his too great powers, recalled to the deputies of Amsterdam the danger which the freedom of their city had incurred from the last stadtholder, William II., reproaching them with having forgotten it, and ended by declaring that he could not comprehend that so much eagerness should be shown to destroy the foundations of liberty. The pretensions of Amsterdam to the upper hand were indignantly denounced, and threats of constraining her to obedience were not spared.

Shaken by these divisions, the deputies of the northern towns, who had until now appeared generally faithful to the republican party, refused to pronounce an opinion before receiving the instructions which they now thought indispensable. In vain De Witt, taking part in the debate with a view to pacifying it, asked to be allowed to make fresh proposals for an agreement. The deputies of Amsterdam refused to allow him to bring them forward, and a new adjournment was voted. The Grand Pensionary took advantage of it to attempt a tardy reconciliation. With this object he endeavoured to renew amicable relations with Van Beuningen, and promised to remain neutral between the two contending parties. Van Beuningen, satisfied with this promise, which he considered as an advance, tried to overcome the resistance of the principal representatives of the republican party who still refused to grant a vote to the Prince of Orange.

As soon as the States of Holland were reassembled, May 16, 1670, De Witt, having ascertained in the first day's sitting that disunion still prevailed, took upon himself to initiate a project of conciliation which might satisfy the Orange party and at the same time reassure the republicans. Having succeeded in arriving at an understanding, not only with Van Beuningen but also with Fagel, he called upon the deputies of Amsterdam and informed them of what he proposed, to which they agreed. After an interval of four days, the second sitting was opened under happier auspices. De Witt reminded the Assembly authoritatively that it was his duty to establish harmony among all the members of the

Assembly, declared that in conforming with this he had drawn up a project for which he hoped to gain acceptance, and requested permission to read it. 'If it is thought convenient,' he said, 'I am ready to explain it, if not I am prepared to tear it up.' The Assembly, weary of the struggle and hoping to find at last a compromise that might put an end to it, eagerly acceded to his request.

According to the proposal read by De Witt a vote was to be allowed to the Prince of Orange; but, from doubts of his uncles, the King of England and the Elector of Brandenburg, the States were asked to forbid his sitting in the council whenever the debates might concern himself or his relations. He was to be debarred also from voting upon the assessment or partition of taxes in the Countries of the Generality, since the exemption from all taxation enjoyed by the Prince of Orange on his estates forbade him to take any share in deliberations concerning imposts to which he was not subject. To these two restrictions De Witt had added a third, which was intended to secure the consent of the republican party to the vote. This was an engagement to be taken by the States of Holland to dispose, by unanimity only, of the office of captain- and admiral-general, which, by the terms of the Act of Harmony, was to remain vacant until the son of William II. had completed his twenty-second year. The satisfaction demanded for the Prince of Orange by his partisans was thus accorded on condition of a guarantee being taken for the future. Their rival pretensions thus satisfied, the deputies of the States hastened to approve the project. 'There were cries of joy,' writes an eye-witness of the scene, 'as if a great victory had been announced, and I saw that there were still mutual friendship and pacific sentiments among the members of the Assembly.'

Unfortunately a few deputies had insisted upon the consent of the town councils being obtained, and the most violent partisans of the Prince of Orange took advantage of this to delay the agreement which had seemed concluded. The opposition of Amsterdam prevented all compromise. Hop the pensionary, and the burgomaster Valkenier, in order to arouse among

the Orange party distrust of Van Beuningen, whom they hoped thus to supplant, proved absolutely intractable. Hop, giving way to his enmity for De Witt, declared in private 'that he would rather see Holland in subjection to the Prince than to a servant of the provincial states'—meaning by that allusion the Grand Pensionary—and he added that 'if it was necessary to be so governed, he would rather take for his master the Bishop of Münster, Catholic though he might be.' Valkenier on his side, thinking himself secure of getting his opinion shared by the other burgomasters, who desired to keep in the background the magistrates of the towns, represented to them that it was a point of honour to keep to the resolution which had been taken to grant a vote to the Prince of Orange, without taking other questions into account. He was only feebly opposed. The burgomasters, by a majority of votes, rejected the compromise proposed by the Grand Pensionary, and enjoined the deputies representing Amsterdam in the Assembly of the States to pay no attention to it. The pensionary Hop, on the suggestion of Valkenier, hastened to send off by express that same night a copy of this resolution to Fagel, the pensionary of Haarlem, who communicated it to the burgomaster of Leyden. The latter informed De Witt, who gave notice to his friends of the fresh difficulties which he foresaw for the next day's sitting.

His expectations were not deceived. Notwithstanding the agreement that had apparently been arrived at, Amsterdam and Haarlem, supported by two other towns, Enckhuyzen and Schoonhoven, declared that they adhered to their original vote, and would admit of no concession. At the second ballot they still maintained their obstinate resistance, while the nobles and the deputies of Dordrecht and Rotterdam seemed on their part disposed to withdraw the consent which they had given to the vote to be granted to the Prince. The urgent intervention of the Grand Pensionary, however, prevented the abandonment of the scheme of compromise, and a third ballot was called for, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour.

De Witt, always master of himself, endeavoured to put an end to the debate by declaring that the restrictions, which

were but slight, to be laid on the Prince's powers as councillor of State were in conformity with common law, and could not be seriously disputed. He represented that the difference was, therefore, only as to the concession required by the republican party, and the object of which was to submit finally the appointment of a captain-general to the unanimous vote of the States of Holland. De Witt appealed to the resolutions which might serve as precedents to this arrangement, and pointed out the dangers which might ensue from so important an appointment if it were not subject to a general agreement. He solemnly reminded them that, if this guarantee could not be obtained, 'the resolution of the States must be left to the grace of God.' The four dissentient towns still refused to be convinced and join in the vote. To avoid the appearance of yielding, Fagel called for the reading of his protest against the Perpetual Edict, which he declared to be revocable, failing the admission of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State. De Groot reminded him of the share he had had in the passing of that Edict, and accused him of desiring to perjure himself. Van Beuningen interfered to put an end to the altercation. It was now an hour after midnight, and the Grand Pensionary obtained the adjournment of the final vote till the next day, in the hope that the night might bring wisdom.

The Prince of Orange was impatiently awaiting the resolution of the Assembly. He had passed the evening at the house of his confidant, Van Odyk, and had sent his servants to the neighbourhood of the Hall of Assembly that he might be informed of their resolution without delay. He was eager to obtain the satisfaction promised to him, and when he learned that there was still some risk of it being postponed he appeared disposed to put a stop to the dangerous zeal of his more ardent partisans. Either by his advice or of their own accord they yielded to a better impulse, and giving up the idea of holding in check the majority of the Assembly, contented themselves with making certain reservations which the deputation of Amsterdam were not authorised to renounce.

On Saturday, May 24, 1670, the resolution which for two months had kept the States of Holland at variance among themselves was voted, at least conditionally. To render it final it was only necessary that the towns which had hitherto held back, should now give their consent or even should be satisfied to make no protest before the end of the month. The town of Haarlem was the first to declare itself a few days afterwards; but stipulated at the same time that it would not be bound by its promise if the admittance of the Prince into the Council of State were retarded on account of negotiations with the other provinces. De Witt hastened to set this example before the three other towns which had joined with Haarlem: Amsterdam, Enckhuyzen, and Schoonhoven, making an urgent final appeal to which they yielded, and the unanimous consent of the Assembly was thus obtained.

The Grand Pensionary himself undertook to communicate it to the Prince of Orange, and introduced him into the committee of the councillor-deputies of Holland, before whom he had to take oath, according to custom, that he had not canvassed or bribed any member of the States in order to obtain his seat. At the same time De Witt hastened to submit to the States-General the scheme of conciliation voted by the States of Holland. The deputies of Utrecht and Overyssel not having received authority from the States of their provinces, he urgently appealed to them to obtain the necessary instructions, and without waiting for the reception of these, having obtained their conditional assent, he called upon the States-General to declare themselves at once. Renswoude, the deputy of Utrecht, not venturing to give a decision without directions from the States of his province, waited until the last hour of his week's term of presidence ended at one o'clock in the afternoon, and then yielded his seat to the deputy of Zealand, who was to succeed him, and who declared the Prince of Orange to be admitted to the Council of State, in accordance with the motion of the States of Holland.

As soon as the resolution had been passed, on Saturday, May 31, at eleven o'clock in the morning, Ruysch, the secretary of the States-General, went to fetch the Prince, accom-

panied by three deputies of Holland, Zealand, and Groningen, who had been instructed to introduce him. The Prince, 'taking care to be ahead of them,' that he might enter the council room first, advanced and took his seat in a velvet arm-chair reserved for him, opposite to that belonging to the Stadtholder of Friesland, who was still too young to take his place there. He listened to the reading of his commission, took the oath of fidelity, and expressed his thanks to the States-General in a few civil words that were well received. As soon as the Assembly rose, two deputies from the Council of State conducted him back to his palace with the same ceremony. The entrance of the Prince into the Council of State with a vote, was a victory which he had the more reason to be proud of, since it had not been undisputed. 'This first step which his friends had made him take,' writes Pomponne, 'was considered by them as one that might lead him to all that they desired to attempt for his future elevation.' The republican party on the other hand had lost the advantages which might have enabled it to turn this appointment to account for a political reconciliation. Once secure of the consent of all the provinces to the separation of the offices of stadtholder and captain-general, De Witt had been imprudent enough to allow differences to arise which he ought to have guarded against at any price. From the moment when the Act of Harmony had made the civil and military officers incompatible, on condition of the admission of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State, the privileges of his new functions ought to have been allowed to him without diminution. To dispute his right to the vote without which his powers would have been inferior to those of the other members of the council, was to take away with one hand what had been given with the other. No doubt the Prince of Orange, by having himself proclaimed premier noble of Zealand without the sanction of the States of Holland, had given plain proof of his impatient ambition, and justly aroused suspicions by his conduct; but when the restoration of an amicable understanding might have been affected by his admittance into the council of State, advantage ought to have been

taken of the opportunity to conclude a treaty of peace with the Orange party. By failing to preserve entire that agreement in the States of Holland upon which depended the stability of the republican government, De Witt had permitted the breach to be reopened by which the son of William II. was soon to arrive at the chief power. 'I greatly regret to think,' writes Van Asperen, the president of the councillor-deputies, 'that we have laid the first stone of an edifice which menaces both our liberties and our persons.'

Notwithstanding all semblance of concord, the rivalry of the two parties was hardly even suspended by a truce. The distrust of the Prince's adversaries became every day more marked, while his partisans, eager to worship the rising sun, put forth constantly increasing demands. The Council of State would not permit the titles of acts or despatches to be worded, 'His Highness and the Council,' and thus reproduce the formula which had been in use when the Princes of Orange sat as stadtholders. William, on the other hand, would not give up the hope of recovering the privileges of his ancestors. Taking advantage of the absence of the Grand Pensionary, who had been summoned to Groningen to settle the differences in that province, he claimed the right to a seat in the States-General, on the occasion of the report given by Wassenaar van Obdam of his interview with the King of France at Dunkirk. His demand was based upon the terms of his commission as Councillor of State, which was exactly similar to that held by his father, and which bore, 'that being summoned to appear in the Assembly of the States-General as well as in that of the Council of State, he was empowered to sit at their meetings.'

Six provinces were in favour of the right of sitting, but the deputies of Holland opposed it until the States of their province, which were not at this moment assembled, should have been consulted. 'We are at a loss,' writes Van Asperen to De Witt, 'not knowing what your opinion may be.' The Grand Pensionary hastened his return, and by his intervention prevented a fresh conflict. He carried a motion that the Prince of Orange should be admitted to the States-General

only in his capacity as councillor of State and when the council was summoned, but had no right to take advantage of the wording of the commission that he had received. It had in fact been copied inadvertently from that of William II., to whom the right to act had been allowed because, at the time when the late Prince of Orange had received it, he had succeeded to the offices of his father Frederick Henry, as stadtholder and captain-general.

'I learn from your letter,' writes De Witt to his brother, 'the insolent attempt that has been made to introduce the Prince of Orange by surprise into the Assembly of the States-General, on the most ill-founded reason possible. The business seems now to have been entirely put an end to, and nobody, excepting the deputies of Zealand, has ventured to uphold it against me, so that I do not imagine that the provinces are inclined to come to blows with Holland, neither do I observe that the deputies of Holland have exhibited any weakness which might lead to divisions.' Three weeks later the Grand Pensionary informs his cousin John de Wit, ambassador in Poland, 'that none of the deputies of Holland, not even those of Haarlem, having appeared disposed to support the unjustifiable demand that had been made in favour of the Prince, there was reason to believe that no more would be heard of the matter.'

The entrance of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State, far from serving to conciliate matters, had thus only been the forerunner to renewed hostilities. The influence that De Witt had flattered himself that he should exercise, by making the heir of the former stadtholders the ward of the States of Holland, had completely disappointed his expectations, and he saw himself forced to abandon his attempted task without obtaining any advantage from it. When once he had been appointed Councillor of State, and had thus entered upon public life, William could not continue in subjection even to the nominal rule of the commissioners entrusted with his education. Moreover, since his guardian had declared him of age, he considered himself released from all tutelage. He had not merely dismissed his tutor, sending him a message by his valet that he required no further services from him, but

he kept equally at a distance the governor appointed for him by the States, only seeing him at meal-times, and so annoyed him by the marks of his dislike that Van Ghent, who at present filled that post, was impatient to resign it. The dignity of the States of Holland was only too deeply compromised already; they could not allow it to be trifled with any longer, and they themselves appealed to the appointment of the Prince as Councillor of State as a reason for putting an end to the authority exercised towards him by the deputies charged with his education. De Witt had acquitted himself of this task with exemplary fidelity, but had left all the profit of it to the heir of the House of Orange, having found in it for himself only irretrievable failure.

The intervention of foreign powers, which did not fail to fan the flames, made the internal divisions still more dangerous. They encouraged this domestic strife with an ardour that threatened the independence of the United Provinces. At the moment when the King of France was rejecting the advances of the States-General towards a reconciliation, and while the King of England appeared to be losing interest in the Triple Alliance and only seeking for pretexts to quarrel with his new allies, Louis XIV. and Charles II. were both making advances to the Prince of Orange from which they had hitherto abstained, and seemed thus to desire to engage him in their cause against that of the republic.

One of the constant correspondents of the Grand Pensionary, Bampfield, pointed out to him this danger, at the same time informing him of the intrigues carried on by the widow of Buat, the former agent of the Orange party, who had been concerned in a conspiracy with England, and whose condemnation had been insisted upon with such implacable severity by the Grand Pensionary. 'Madame Buat,' he writes, 'has gone to Holland secretly. She is a clever woman, envenomed against the government and particularly against your person. She has been seen every day in Paris by everyone of any consideration, both men and women, and as she was engaged in dangerous intrigues during the war with England, there is every human probability that she is carrying on some such now

with France in favour of the Prince of Orange. England will do all she can on her side, in an underhand manner, by secret advice and assistance, to restore the Prince's affairs entirely, and to place you under the necessity of permitting and aiding in this in spite of yourselves, as she believes her interest to be involved, and that the State may by this means be more speedily and more surely placed in subjection to her.'

These forebodings were well founded. Louis XIV. could not fail to encourage dissensions, with a view to weakening the republic, upon which he wished to revenge himself. The disputes to which the admittance of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State had given rise appeared to him to offer a favourable opportunity to take his part. The Prince had skilfully foreseen the feelings of the King of France, and indirectly made known to Pomponne how highly he should value a congratulatory message from the King his master upon the success that he had just obtained. Louis, too happy to satisfy his desires, charged his ambassador to inform him 'that he had not expressed his feelings towards him for fear that such a declaration might be made use of against him, adding that if the Prince of Orange thought otherwise he would not fail to write to him.' He sent him also his congratulations 'that he had thus gained a step soon to lead to other and higher ones, namely, to the establishment of the same authority that his ancestors had exercised in the State so justly and worthily.' In conformity with his instructions Pomponne paid a visit to the Prince of Orange, who received and returned it with every mark of pleasure, respect, and gratitude. He then handed to the ambassador a letter of thanks for the King of France. Louis hastened to reply, and the Prince immediately wrote again to assure him that he should always be ready 'to testify by his actions and by his zeal for the service of the King of France the same ardent attachment to the honour and interests of that kingdom which his ancestors had so often had the happiness of displaying.'

Charles II. on his side affected a crafty solicitude for the interests of his nephew, of which he had seemed to take little heed at the time of the Triple Alliance. To encourage the

hopes of the Orange party, he invited the Prince to England, pretexting for the journey his wish to make him a Knight of the Garter, and to settle the payment of his mother's dowry. He reckoned particularly on taking advantage of his nephew's visit to his court to make him an object of suspicion to the Grand Pensionary, and thus to take away all chance of success from the last attempt to reconcile the republicans and the Orange party.

This invitation was, in fact, certain to arouse De Witt's anxiety. The secret despatches which he had received from Paris had informed him of the treacherous intentions of the King of England towards the republic. The ambassador of the United Provinces at the court of France, according to his report to the States-General in the following year, had made known to the Grand Pensionary, in a letter written in cypher, that Charles had abandoned the cause of their High Mightinesses in consideration of the subsidies he had received. Rumpf, the secretary of embassy, also communicated his suspicions to De Witt, and warned him of the Prince of Orange's journey, 'as meriting consideration in such dark times of unpleasant conjuncture.' The hostile behaviour which the English Government had exhibited towards the republic since the conclusion of the Triple Alliance gave ground also for serious apprehension. Convinced that the King of England was making advances to the Prince of Orange only in consequence of an understanding with the King of France, the Grand Pensionary feared that a youth of twenty might be accessible to offers tempting his ambition, and might consent to become the accomplice of the enemy of his country in order to arrive at sovereign power.

This suspicion, which the Prince of Orange was afterwards so nobly to belie, seemed at the time justified by the dissimulation of which he had already given more than one proof, as well as by the intrigues of his partisans with Charles II. during the course of the late war between England and the United Provinces. Accordingly, when the Earl of Ossory, brother-in-law of the English minister, Arlington, and son-in-law of Beverwaert, the former Dutch ambassador in London,

came as Charles's envoy to the Hague to fetch the King's nephew, it was in vain that he endeavoured to persuade De Witt that Charles II. would become the protector of the republic if it would submit to be governed by the Prince of Orange. The Grand Pensionary appeared little disposed to pay attention to these advances, which he rightly judged to be not very sincere. He contented himself with putting forward the engagement entered into by the States to postpone all discussion as to the appointment of a captain-general until the Prince of Orange had completed his twenty-second year, and suggested that it would be better to allow him to go through an apprenticeship to public business in the Council of State.

De Witt did not depart from this reserve when the deputies of the provinces most favourable to William wished to take the opportunity of the notice given by the Prince to the States-General of his approaching departure, to demand that the Dutch ambassador in London should receive instructions to communicate all their negotiations to him. Through the intervention of the States of Holland he obtained a decision that no right of taking any part in the embassy should be allowed to the Prince, and the deputies of the States-General, who were commissioned to offer their good wishes to him on his journey, had to content themselves with requesting him, 'as a polite form,' to recommend the interests of the republic to the King, his uncle.

After giving a banquet and fête to the principal members of the government, the Prince of Orange embarked at Brill with a numerous suite, including many young nobles representing the chief families of the republic. From the moment of his arrival, November 11, 1670, the English court overwhelmed him with demonstrations intended to flatter and seduce him. Entertainments and banquets were offered to him. He was received with royal honours at Oxford and Cambridge, and his birthday was celebrated in state in London. Charles II. spared no attentions that might win him to his cause, but was not long in discovering, according to his own account, 'that he was too warmly Dutch and Protestant to leave any

hope of using him for the execution of his designs against the United Provinces.' 'The characters of the uncle and nephew,' writes Pomponne, 'were ill-suited for agreement. The King, free, outspoken, and easy, was entirely devoted to pleasure. The Prince, on the contrary, was naturally serious and reserved, averse from all appearance of vice, and, profiting by the advice of his grandmother, the Princess-Dowager of Orange, would take only such part in the King's diversions as civility required. His sobriety and reserve appeared to condemn them, and he thereby greatly pleased the English, who praised in him the tendencies opposed to those which they blamed in the King. But what especially moved them were his assiduity and punctuality in the performance of all his religious obligations and the exhibition of his great zeal for the Protestants. The popular favour which he thus conciliated might give the King of England reason to fear that his nephew would one day be a most dangerous enemy to his family.'

When informed of the attitude assumed by the Prince of Orange in London, Louis XIV. was careful to dissuade Charles II. from making confidences to his nephew, representing to him how dangerous it would be to make any revelations to a prince 'whose extreme youth gave reason to fear his indiscretion, and whose real sentiments appeared so uncertain.' Yielding to advice, which indeed coincided with his own impressions, the King of England allowed his nephew to return after a three months' stay without making known to him his treaty of alliance with Louis XIV.

The favourable reception of the Prince by his uncle had, however, sufficed to encourage his partisans, who accordingly undertook a new campaign. They imperiously demanded his restoration to the offices held by his ancestors, as a pledge to the King of England, whose tottering alliance might thus be strengthened. Van Beuningen, who had returned from London to the Hague, renewed the steps he had already taken to obtain his admittance into the Council of State. 'Nothing can exceed,' writes Pomponne, 'the good services rendered by Monsieur van Beuningen to the Prince of Orange.

In his report to the States of his embassy to England, he certified that the United Provinces had experienced the best possible effects from the Prince's use in their favour of his credit with the King, adding that in future more regard ought to be had for his interests, and the passions of certain persons opposed to him should no longer be yielded to.'

The States-General received this communication favourably and desired to conform their conduct to it. They testified, therefore, their displeasure to the Grand Pensionary, who had for some time kept secret the letters written by the ambassador Boreel from England, pointing out the methods proper for strengthening the fidelity of Charles II. They learned their existence from some despatches addressed to themselves, and, suspecting that they referred to measures to be taken for the advancement of the Prince of Orange, they insisted that De Witt should lay the correspondence before them. To show the Grand Pensionary also their distrust of his conduct, they enjoined Boreel to send them copies of his letters at once with special orders to change nothing in them.

De Witt did not allow himself to be disturbed. He appeased all complaints, and by skill and firmness combined eluded all difficulties. Warned of the measures which Charles II. was preparing to take in favour of the Prince of Orange, he paid a visit to the Princess-Dowager. In this interview he succeeded in convincing her of the injury the Prince would do himself, even among his own friends, if he requested the interference of the King of England, in the face of the resolutions of Holland, which did not admit of recommendations by foreign sovereigns for any public office. In his opinion the Prince of Orange ought alone to owe the advantages that he might in future expect, to the affection of the States and their gratitude towards his House. The Princess-Dowager, not wishing to compromise the interests of her grandson, checked the impatience of his partisans, and the Grand Pensionary once more succeeded in his policy of resistance. It was all the more justified because concessions made to the King of England in favour of his nephew would not have destroyed the treaties between Charles II. and Louis XIV.

'If Monsieur de Witt,' writes Lionne to Pomponne, 'does bring about anything for the Prince's advantage, so much the better for the latter; but this forced concession will not effect any change in the King of England's mind as to the determinations already arrived at upon other and greater reasons.'

But the prudent conduct of the Grand Pensionary was powerless to dispel the now inevitable dangers of the home situation. The two parties remained in arms, ready to resume the offensive, but not under equal conditions. One was face to face with the difficulties, the jealousies, and the weaknesses which must be surmounted by those who would remain at the head of the government. The other was encouraged by the hopes and passions aroused by the struggle for power when victory seems at hand. Their rivalry once awakened was destroying the work of pacification which De Witt hoped to make lasting. It was the more disastrous as its revival occurred at the moment when a most dangerous coalition was about to menace the independence of the republic, and to deprive it of the advantages gained by the treaties through means of which the Grand Pensionary had hoped to secure it from all danger abroad. The formidable resentment of the King of France was the danger against which defence was now needed. Louis XIV. had never forgiven the United Provinces for having placed obstacles in the way of his attempted annexation of the Netherlands. Prevented by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle from making himself master of the Low Countries under penalty of a war with England and Sweden, he postponed the execution of his projects against Spain, and, calculating upon reducing her to the impossibility of resistance by first subduing her protectors, he determined to strike the first blow at those who had presumed to set bounds to his power. Another sentiment besides that of the offended conqueror contributed also to make Louis the enemy of the States-General. The absolute monarch, accustomed to the adulation of his subjects, was indignant with a republic which, by granting the right of asylum to liberty of the press, exposed him to attacks from the pamphlets and gazettes of the Hague,

Amsterdam, and Haarlem. Once before, on the occasion of a libel entitled, 'The Conversion of Madame de la Vallière,' published some years previously, Louis had expressed the great importance he attached 'to obtaining prompt satisfaction for such insolence.' Lionne was carelessly renewing his complaints and denouncing to Pomponne what he called 'this fishwives' licence.' De Witt was careful to reply that the States would not fail to punish the audacity and chastise the insolence of their news-writers, whenever anything was published in their gazettes prejudicial to the honour and reputation of a great king, the friend and ally of their country. He stated, indeed, that the person of whom complaint had been made, had been deprived for a month of his printing licence; still, however, seeking excuses and evasions. He declared that the gazetters only copied what was sent to them from Paris, and that they were besides generally under the jurisdiction only of the municipal authorities, in their capacity of citizens of privileged towns. He added with much good sense, 'that he thought there was more inconvenience than advantage in requiring a closer examination of the accused writings, because in that case the magistrates might become responsible for the news published, if they did not institute prosecutions.' Pomponne was wise enough to advise the King of France to 'endure what he could not prevent,' but such submission was intolerable to the pride of Louis XIV., and his royal dignity seemed to him concerned in not leaving such offences unpunished.

The commercial rivalry between France and the republic rendered fresh conflicts inevitable. The court of France had not long followed the traditions of Cardinal Richelieu's policy, which had encouraged foreign trade in order to enrich the kingdom by the export of French products and open to them foreign markets. By the tariff which the Cardinal established, the inhabitants of the United Provinces who traded with France had a right to be treated as subjects of the King both on entering and leaving the country. This privilege gave a great impulse to the carrying trade, in which their principal wealth consisted. But when Colbert

had undertaken the creation of a merchant navy a different system obtained, and a duty of sixty sous per ton was imposed on all Dutch vessels leaving French ports. Thus attacked in their shipping interest, the United Provinces had developed a new source of prosperity in their manufactures, the quality and cheapness of their goods insuring them a large opening in France for their trade in cloth, linen, woollen stuffs, and ribbons, to the prejudice of the products of French origin.

Impatient to deprive them of these profits, Colbert took steps to enrich the home industries by a sudden change of system. After founding the great companies of the Baltic and the Mediterranean which were intended as rivals to Dutch commerce, he resolved to encourage French manufactures by protecting them against all competition. With this object, he in 1664 doubled the duty upon most foreign goods, and the tariff fixing the new imposts had just been succeeded by edicts which still further increased them. The piece of cloth was to pay forty livres instead of only twenty-eight, and products, such as refined sugar, were doubled in price by the duty. Such fiscal measures amounted to a prohibitory system, and were ruinous to the republic.

To put a stop to them, it was necessary to enter into negotiations, and consequently to fill up the vacancy in the embassy to France. This had continued since the death, in October 1668, of the ambassador Boreel, who indeed had long been of little use to his employers, and had held aloof from all negotiations during the last mission of Van Beuningen. The succession to his post had been offered to more than one person without finding acceptance, as the ill-will openly manifested by the court of France foreboded the failure of all negotiations. After vainly addressing themselves to one of the nobles of their Assembly, Daniel de Werkendam, to Conrad Burgh, the Treasurer-General of the United Provinces, to the Grand Pensionary's cousin, who had lately been sent to Poland as minister plenipotentiary, and to the son of the late ambassador Boreel, the States of Holland, to whom belonged the right of nomination, on the advice of John

de Witt, proposed to the States-General Peter de Groot, ambassador of the United Provinces in Sweden. They thus selected from their diplomatists the one who was most likely to be well received at the court of France.

De Groot belonged to an old family of Delft, which for five hundred years had filled the highest municipal functions. Hugo de Groot, his father—better known as Grotius—one of the most remarkable men of his time, had been a victim of the civil disorder which had cost the life of the Grand Pensionary of Holland, Olden Barneveldt. Freed from captivity by the devotion of his wife, who effected his escape from his prison at Loevestein in a chest of books, he had been obliged to leave his country, and had withdrawn to Sweden, where his services were eagerly solicited by Queen Christina. Sent as ambassador to Paris, he readily won the good graces of Louis XIV., and was received with open arms by all learned France.

His son, over whose education he had watched notwithstanding his exile, justified the father's hopes. In appearance he was weakly and insignificant, and was slightly lame from the results of a fall; but, writes a contemporary, 'Nature, who had been but a stepmother to his body, had been a true mother to his mind.' Educated at the university of Leyden, he repaired to France to complete his studies near his father, and took his degree of Doctor of Law at Orleans. He did not marry until 1652, when he was thirty-seven years old, and then took to wife Agatha van Rhijn, who brought him besides fortune every gift that could make life happy. 'I loved her above all things,' he wrote twenty years later in exile and after her death; 'she was indefatigable in her care of me, lavishing upon me her kindness and affection. Until her illness, which was the beginning of my sorrows, I may say that I knew only superficially all the ills of life.'

After being for some years councillor to the Elector Palatine, De Groot entered the service of his own country, by his appointment to the important office of Pensionary of Amsterdam, which gave him a seat in the Assembly of the States of Holland. He quitted it only to be sent as ambassador to Sweden, and while in Stockholm secured the defini-

tive conclusion of the Triple Alliance. In the following year he heard almost at the same time that he had been proposed by the deputies of Holland for the French embassy, and that he had been elected by the burgomasters and councillors of Rotterdam as pensionary of that town. He hesitated as to the choice he should make: his appointment to the office of pensionary of his native town of Rotterdam would restore to him the fortune of his ancestors, of which his father had been deprived by Maurice of Orange. On the other hand, his selection for the French embassy—flattering as it might be to his ambition—had already brought him some annoyance. It had been opposed by several provinces, and when an agreement in his favour was at length arrived at in the Assembly of the States-General, the deputies of Amsterdam, led by his personal enemy Valkenier, had refused to guarantee to him on his return from France the next vacancy in the court of justice, which he would have desired to secure for himself. He was, however, too indifferent to his personal interests to allow them to weigh against those of the public.

He yielded accordingly to the advice of the Grand Pensionary, who, notwithstanding the advantages of his presence in the Assembly of the States of the province, where he would have been a most useful ally of the republican party, made all such considerations secondary to the necessity for his prompt departure. In accepting the embassy twelve months after it had been first offered to him, he stipulated for no conditions, he did not even demand any additional salary on account of the heavy expenses of a residence at the court of France, where 'I spend a third more than is allowed me,' he writes eighteen months later, on the eve of his return to the Hague. He had no thought but that of fulfilling an imperative duty, no wish but that of rendering a great service to his country.

He might have been excused in refusing, by intelligence which gave him warning of the difficulties in the way of the success of his mission. The communications from Count d'Estrades which De Groot had received during a recent visit of the former to the Hague, and the still less reassuring declara-

tions of the Marquis de Pomponne, left him few illusions as to the disposition of Louis XIV. towards the United Provinces. The States-General, indeed, were so alarmed, that the most trivial events or the most improbable news were enough to make them fear a breach. They had already taken umbrage at the proposal made in the preceding year by Count d'Estrades, who had asked their leave to resign the command of the company that he held, but had not fulfilled his intentions. Their fears were renewed when the Prince of Tarentum, having abjured the reformed faith, resigned all the offices that he held—such as those of lieutenant-general of cavalry, and governor of Bois-le-Duc—notwithstanding the pressure put upon him to retain them. Incredulous of the motives he alleged for his conduct, they persuaded themselves that he chose not to remain in their service, in obedience to the secret instructions, or at least the wishes, of the King of France.

The States were also alarmed at the number of troops which Louis had collected and were now being trained at the camp of St. Germain. Their uneasiness appeared suddenly justified by the alarm given to De Groot on his journey across France. 'The ambassador of the United Provinces having started on his journey,' writes Pomponne in his memoirs, 'met some regiments on the march in the forest of Senlis. They were troops who had quitted the camp. Surprised and disturbed by the movement of the division, he asked its destination. Some officers, who had found out that he was the envoy of the States-General, amused themselves by replying that it was the royal army on its way to Maestricht. He took the matter more seriously than was meant, and the very same day imparted his fears to his employers.' Although still at absolute peace with France, there was little doubt felt at the Hague that Louis XIV. was about to recommence war, and to resume against the United Provinces that sudden invasion of the Spanish Netherlands which he had embarked upon three years previously. On receiving the communication sent to him by De Groot, De Witt hastened to call upon the French ambassador. 'It was

the first and only time,' observes Pomponne, 'that I noticed any confusion in the mind or countenance of that minister who was always master of himself and always equal in the greatest and most difficult matters.' Pomponne hastened to reassure him by a positive assertion 'that if the Dutch ambassador had encountered any division of the army, it was only because the troops were returning to their garrisons after the camp had broken up.'

It is hard to believe that Pomponne invented an imaginary story, although De Groot persisted in denying that he had been the dupe of a mystification. 'I was not at all alarmed at the disquieting information that I received upon the road,' he writes to Wicquefort after his arrival in Paris, 'as I had too much confidence in the King's sense of justice, and in the advanced season of the year, which would not allow of the commencement of such a rupture. It was reported, however, at court that I had taken such alarm that I had despatched a special messenger to give warning to my masters. But I replied to those who told me of this, that they must have a very bad opinion of me to think that I could have so bad a one of the King.' At any rate, whatever had been the first news sent to De Witt, that which followed could not fail to justify the anxiety of the Grand Pensionary. If the troops met by De Groot were not intended as a menace against Maestricht they were at least directed against Lorraine—a sudden invasion of which would leave the United Provinces at the mercy of Louis XIV., and threaten them with an aggression against which their ambassador vainly attempted to guard them.

De Groot reached Paris at the end of August 1670, after a journey the fatigues of which were increased by his sufferings from gout, but found Louis absent on a visit to Chambord. He put himself in communication with the Secretary of State, Lionne, to request his good graces for the conciliatory mission he came to fulfil. Lionne, with no wish, however, to dishearten him, did not conceal from him how difficult his task would be. His illness having delayed the audience which he had hitherto failed to obtain, the deputies

of Amsterdam, persisting in their hostility towards him, showed some disposition to demand his recall at once. But at last, after three months' residence, he was enabled to make his state entry into the capital with a suite of twenty-five coaches with six horses each. The next day he repaired in great state to Saint Germain, where he was received in turns by the King, the Queen, and the Dauphin. The first difficulties which he had to settle were questions of commerce. The duties imposed by Colbert upon Dutch manufactures closed the French markets to them. To reopen them the United Provinces had the choice of two courses, conciliation or reprisal. In the hope of obtaining a hearing for his complaints, De Groot abstained from even the appearance of menace. Faithful to the instructions of the Grand Pensionary, he represented to Lionne that he was charged to implore Louis XIV. to put an end to his severities towards the trade of the United Provinces. Lionne inquired at once if he were asking for a right or a favour, adding that the States-General had done nothing to incline the King of France to grant them any favours. De Groot did not allow himself to be put out of countenance. The French minister having declared that, if he wanted to get other measures adopted, he ought to begin by proving that France lost more than she gained by the taxes of which he complained, De Groot explained to Lionne that the system of duties established by Colbert would oblige other nations to reciprocate in a manner that would be fatal to French commerce. He owned that if the States-General had not yet resorted to such measures, it was from deference to the King, their ally; but he did not conceal from him that France would force them to adopt this course if she continued to forbid access to their merchandise. Finally he pointed out to him the loss she would suffer if she no longer found an outlet for her trade, while the United Provinces could dispense with French imports, since these consisted for the greater part of objects of luxury, besides wines and spirits.

Lionne avoided entering into an argument in which he felt that he might be worsted. He advised De Groot to call upon Colbert, who took care not to receive him. Still undis-

couraged, the ambassador of the republic endeavoured to enlighten Louis XIV. himself, and transmitted to him a memorandum in which he set forth, with great breadth of view and remarkable loftiness of tone, the considerations which he had placed before Lionne. In it he upheld the cause of free trade as benefiting the happiness of nations, by opening new springs for the labour and skill of men, and securing to them, whether by facilities of exchange only or by the cheapness arising from competition, all the comforts of life at a small cost. In the most exalted strain of thought he referred it to the will of God, 'Who, in His Divine Providence,' he writes, 'desired not only to give to His creatures all that would be of service to them, but also to give it to them by means fitted to establish general friendship and intercourse between all parts of the world, and so varied the nature of soils and climates.' 'It would be,' he added, 'a disturbance of this order, if the subjects of one kingdom were to be prevented from enjoying the fruits of another country, and from disposing in exchange of the produce of their own soil or their own labour.'

Louis XIV. was too impatient to gratify his resentment, and Colbert too obstinately determined to put in practice his system of protection of trade, to take any heed of the considerations of philosophy or the reasonings of political economy. On receipt of the ambassador's memoir, the King sent him word that he would reply to it as soon as he had looked into it. The reply sent by Lionne was summed up in these words: 'That his Majesty was acting within the terms of the treaty, and would alter nothing in the measures that he had taken concerning trade.' There remained nothing for the United Provinces but to obtain redress for themselves. Convinced by the first despatches addressed by De Groot to De Witt that it was useless to attempt to obtain any satisfaction from the King of France, the States of Holland, taking the initiative, had already urged the States-General to interdict French commerce so long as the French markets were closed to the trade of the United Provinces.

By the influence of the Grand Pensionary, whose eyes were now opened as to the policy of conciliation he had so

long recommended, the difficulties suggested by some of the provinces, who still hesitated about taking decided measures, were at length set aside. In the beginning of the year 1671 the States-General published a proclamation prohibiting French brandies, imposing a duty of twenty-five per cent. upon salt, taxing foreign syrup at a halfpenny per pound so as to strike at the French sugar refineries, and laying a duty of fifty per cent. upon French goods of the nature of articles of luxury, dress, or furniture. Desiring to give to these measures, which they felt themselves obliged to take, merely the character of reprisals, the States engaged not to enforce them if the King of France would renounce the new tariffs which were ruining the commerce of the republic.

Louis XIV., however, pretended to consider himself aggrieved by the resolution they had taken, and immediately issued an Order of Council laying fresh and crushing duties upon herrings and spices entering France. In addition, as a blow to the carrying trade of the United Provinces, he forbade the export in their ships of any cargoes of wine or brandy from the kingdom, alleging the refusal of the States-General to allow these products to enter their territories. This was a direct breach of the treaty of alliance and commerce concluded between the two countries in 1662, which stipulated reciprocal freedom of traffic for all goods and merchandise the transport of which was not forbidden to the subjects of the King of France. 'The honour of so great a monarch,' writes De Witt to De Groot, 'seems interested in this business, that he may not be stained with the accusation of a breach of his word as confirmed by his own hand and deed.' But remonstrances and offers of concession alike failed to move Louis. He seemed even to take pleasure in threatening the States with the most violent measures. The warning given to the principal traders in Paris and in the sea-board towns to recall French goods shipped in Dutch vessels, made De Groot fear that the seizure of all merchant ships carrying the flags of the United Provinces might be imminent. The States-General, according to the despatches of their ambassador, might prepare for the worst extremities.

Fresh fears were raised when the King of France announced to them his intention of visiting his Flemish frontiers in the spring of the year 1671, with an army of 30,000 men, which was to be encamped at Ath and at Dunkirk. At the same time Louis informed the King of England and the Emperor of Germany that Spain had nothing to fear for the Netherlands. The States-General, indirectly informed of these assurances, which seemed to them to forebode danger to themselves, vainly endeavoured to obtain some reassuring promises, which the King of France was careful to evade. The communications which they received from Madrid and Brussels increased their uneasiness and made them fear a declaration of war.

The Grand Pensionary, foreseeing that a rupture was inevitable, would not leave the United Provinces exposed without defence to the dangers of a surprise. In the previous year he had pointed out the necessity of fresh levies, and declared that the States ought to redouble their precautionary measures. As the danger drew nearer he began to advise boldness instead of prudence. After consultation with the Spanish ambassador and the Emperor's minister he recommended the States to assume the offensive, thinking it better to affront the perils of war rather than to wait for certain destruction. 'This advice might have been the best,' wrote Pomponne in after days; 'the French fortified towns lay open, the King's forces had not yet been swelled by the troops he afterwards raised in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and his own dominions; he had no navy afloat, and the harbours of France were disarmed.' Admiral Ruyter, summoned from Amsterdam and secretly consulted, answered for the success of a descent upon the coast of France and the occupation of the Isle of Oleron, which would close to French vessels the rivers of the Loire, the Garonne, and the Charente.

But the schemes of the Grand Pensionary were too bold not to encounter insuperable objections, and the temporising counsels opposed to them more easily obtained a hearing. Accordingly Pomponne hastened to reassure the court of France, and Lionne having alluded in one of his letters

to that fable of La Fontaine in which the rats consulted together as to who should bell the cat, he replied that 'this comparison would soon be seen to be well-founded, so quickly would the resolution of all their advisers vanish as soon as the question arose of who should tie the bell.' The King of France too, desirous to gain time, took pains to deceive De Groot by tardy assurances of a pacific policy, by which the Dutch ambassador allowed himself to be deluded. Having obtained from Louis permission to accompany him to Dunkirk on his journey to Flanders, De Groot preceded him in order to present the report of his negotiations to the States. He inspired them with fresh confidence by giving them hopes that the King of France would not prove inexorable, and that he would in all probability be obliged to pay some heed to the sufferings of his subjects, who were incurring losses to the amount of 35,000,000 francs yearly by duties imposed in France upon foreign products, and in the United Provinces upon French goods. De Groot further pointed out 'the penury of the treasury and the insufficiency of the naval armaments' as so many obstacles which must prevent any war being undertaken, at least at present.

His predictions appeared to be verified by the inoffensive operations of the French troops collected in Flanders. Louis employed them, under the direction of Vauban, in works of fortification which gave the name of the 'wheelbarrow campaign' to these military operations. Encouraged by this apparent security, the States-General instructed De Groot to carry back to the King of France the most conciliatory proposals and to offer excuses to him for the course they had followed. Meanwhile the Grand Pensionary was attempting to renew with Pomponne the negotiations concerning the Spanish succession. He represented to him that the Triple Alliance, to which the United Provinces would always remain faithful, did not prevent them from coming to an understanding with France for settling the future fate of the Netherlands conditionally on the death of the King of Spain. To gain a favourable reception for these proposals, De Witt urged the

former French ambassador, Count d'Estrades, with whom he had always maintained the most friendly relations, to take advantage of his visit to Dunkirk to come to the Hague for a week. 'In Monsieur de Witt's anxiety to speak to me,' writes D'Estrades, 'he will tell me things which I feel certain he would not say to anyone else.'

The illusion was soon dispelled. Determined to reject all advances, Louis desired his ambassador to 'listen to no discourse which might even be to his advantage.' Not only did he refuse permission to D'Estrades to visit the Hague, but he even put an end to Pomponne's embassy by sending him to Stockholm to detach Sweden from the Dutch alliance. 'The King, who had summoned me to Dunkirk,' writes Pomponne, 'welcomed me with that gracious reception that he accords generally to those with whom he is satisfied, and from whom he expects some service. He made me give him an account of the situation of the republic, of its embarrassments, of the advances that had been made towards a reconciliation, and of the replies given to evade it.' To delay, however, the rupture of diplomatic relations, the King desired him simultaneously with his recall to announce the appointment of Courtin as his successor. He desired him to assure the States-General 'that, in making choice of the minister who had already represented him at the Hague, he continued to testify his good-will towards them.' 'He thought,' writes Lionne, 'that such assurances might lull these beggars to sleep,' and the French ambassador was careful to renew these protestations of good-will in the solemn farewell audience given him by the States-General.

They could not, however, deceive De Witt. As soon as he heard of the recall of the Marquis de Pomponne, he went to see him that he might not appear to despair yet of the reconciliation Courtin might effect, though he plainly expressed his uneasiness on the subject. Pomponne having attempted to soothe his anxiety by reassuring him as to the short visit that he was about to make to Sweden, De Witt did not conceal that he considered himself justified in disbelieving him. The absence of Courtin, who, notwithstanding his appointment, never entered upon his residence, dispelled the illusions of

the most confiding. The King of France was no longer represented at the Hague. He contented himself with retaining as agent a subject of the republic, Bernarts or Bernard, who continued his correspondence until the declaration of war, and even after the rupture, but was never invested with any diplomatic authority.

The intelligence transmitted by the ambassador of the States-General on his return to Paris belied the last hopes of peace which he had rashly encouraged. De Groot was not long in discovering the treachery or credulity of those who had persuaded him that France was not in a position to undertake a new war. His despatches constantly gave notice of French armaments and negotiations, and left no further doubt as to the agreement between Louis and Charles II., while they announced that the United Provinces would be attacked by France in the following spring. Believing that he could not turn aside the course of events, over which diplomacy seemed to him now to have no hold, suffering besides from attacks of illness which left him sometimes 'no power to read, write, or even speak,' De Groot urgently demanded his recall. The States requested him to remain at his post as long as he could fulfil its functions. He complied with their request, but wrote at the same time to them that neither his presence nor absence could be of any further advantage or prejudice to the republic.

The Grand Pensionary could not, however, make up his mind to believe that all negotiation was useless, and endeavoured to persuade De Groot that there was still a last chance of the preservation of peace. 'The only thing,' he writes to his brother-in-law, Deutz, 'which might suggest a contrary opinion to the expectation of a rupture is that both at the court of France and among the French ministers residing at the other European courts, the intention is too openly proclaimed, and it is allowed that nothing can be more opposed to the political principles and practice of France than to give notice of the blow so long beforehand to those on whom it is intended to fall.' If he really cherished this illusion it was of short duration.

In vain did the States-General make a final attempt to

intimidate or to mollify the King of France. Their alternations of reprisals and remonstrances were but idle expedients, and could only serve to prove their weakness, while exposing them to fresh humiliations. After vainly renewing their remonstrances against the duties levied by Louis, which were so much to their injury, they attempted to carry out to the last extremity a war of tariffs against French commerce which should compel Louis to show himself more compliant. They hoped thus to strike at the very foundations of the wealth of France, by making her lose the great profits of her exports to the United Provinces. They especially persuaded themselves that the interdiction of French wine would inflict irreparable injury on the wine-growers, and would spread discontent among many of the provinces of France that must in the end get the better of Colbert's determination. But they were not long in perceiving that they could not count upon the murmurs of the subjects of the King of France to dissuade him from the severities systematically practised towards them. If they had flattered themselves that they could force a change of policy upon him, they could no longer conceal from themselves the vanity of their hopes.

Negotiations could not help them any more than retaliation. They endeavoured, however, to resume them by taking advantage of the appointment of Pomponne as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The great minister, Hugues de Lionne, who had so skilfully conducted the foreign policy of Louis XIV., worn out by work and over-indulgence in pleasure, had recently died suddenly, before receiving the recompense of his last diplomatic successes. It was for Pomponne that the King of France reserved his inheritance. Louis despatched a gentleman of his household to Stockholm to deliver to him a letter announcing his appointment. He received the news, as he tells us in his memoirs, with a calmness that does honour to his Christian principles, 'not allowing himself to be dazzled by the favours of Fortune, and rather preparing to support her ill-will.' De Witt hastened to write to him to congratulate him in the warmest terms, and to beg him to assist in restoring that friendship which both countries

had formerly thought so necessary, assuring him that the States for their part had no other wish than to respond. 'It would be,' he said, 'a task worthy of the hand of a minister belonging by birth to a family which has produced so many great men, and in which I have always observed such pacific inclinations that there is nothing I do not venture to promise myself.' In the hope that on his way from Sweden to France, Pomponne might pass through the Hague, the States directed the Grand Pensionary to request a conference with him; but they learnt to their regret that he would return to France through Münster and Cologne, by the King's orders, and would thus avoid any meeting.

They had no resource left but a direct appeal to Louis XIV., either to be taken again into favour, or to know with certainty that he was determined to attack them, in order to claim the assistance of their allies. They solemnly addressed to him, accordingly, a letter in which they expressed their fears, and declared that they could not believe in the aggression with which they were threatened, so long as they had received no preliminary notice of the offences imputed to them. After defending themselves from the accusations of having failed in the observance of their treaty of alliance with France, they expressed once more their desire to put an end to the mutual vexations from which the trade of both countries was suffering. They justified their armaments by an appeal to the necessity of defence, and offered to disarm if the King of France would assure them they had no attack from him to apprehend. They finally protested their eagerness to give him the most complete satisfaction, although they could not give up the engagements which they had entered into with other allies.

Objections were raised to the despatch of this letter, which seemed to amount to an apology from the States, and some members of the Assembly asked that it should be sent to De Groot in the form of instructions to which their ambassador should conform himself at his next interview with Louis XIV. Others represented that it was of importance to make a public communication to the King of France, in order to baffle the intrigues to which he resorted to persuade the other powers

that the United Provinces were disposed to give up the Netherlands to him, and so to betray the Triple Alliance. Not choosing to give any grounds for the rumour of secret negotiations entered into by the Grand Pensionary, the States-General decided that De Groot should be instructed to demand an audience of the King, in order to deliver to Louis the letter addressed to him by them. The King of France was in no haste to receive him, but allowed his reply to be easily foreseen. He began by notifying to the States his decision on their dispute with Denmark, which had been submitted to his arbitration, and seemed to take pains to give judgment against them on all points; and notwithstanding the urgent entreaties of the Dutch ambassador, he kept him waiting for his audience until the beginning of the following year.

De Groot left Paris in his state coach at six o'clock in the morning of January 4, 1672, arriving at St. Germain at nine. He first laid his case before Letellier, representing to him the misfortunes that a rupture would cause even to France, and the engagements which the United Provinces would be forced to enter into with the enemies of the kingdom. Letellier, who had no fears on that score, being aware of the alliances which Louis had secured, evaded all reply, asserting that the King had not yet announced any intention of declaring war against the States. Half an hour after this first interview, De Groot was admitted to Louis XIV., being obliged on account of his infirmities to be carried in a chair as far as the guard-room. 'I told the King,' he writes, 'that my masters asked not to be worse treated than common criminals, who, at least, know what crimes are imputed to them. Their conscience, I added, is so much at ease that they do not doubt that they can clear themselves, and any involuntary offence they are ready to make good. The King can obtain every reasonable satisfaction which he is about to seek in the chances of war instead of having them accorded to the mere power of his name. Having thus begun the interview, I present the letter from the States; the King opens it and says angrily that it is very unnecessary, since it has been already communicated to the courts of Europe, and he himself

has a copy. I reply that the debates in the Assembly of the States are public, and that he would have had the first information if he had granted me an audience sooner. The King expresses surprise that the States should call him to account for his armaments, theirs having been the cause of his. I assure him that the States desire nothing more than disarmament, and to be foremost in satisfying him. The King, to close the interview, replies that having begun his armaments he shall now conclude them, and will afterwards come to a determination in accordance with the dictates of his glory and his interests.'

The despatch sent by Louis to the States two days after his reply to De Groot, was still more haughty and menacing. He added sarcasm to arrogance. 'If it is true, as you acknowledge,' he writes, 'that justice is the rule of our actions, and that you are satisfied with the examination that you have made of your own, you ought not to be in any anxiety.' He concluded by boasting of his alliances, and launching the following haughty challenge from the stronger to the weaker: 'We must tell you that we shall increase our armaments on land and at sea, and that when they are in that condition in which we propose to place them, we shall make such use of them as we consider suitable to our dignity, holding ourselves accountable to no man.'

This reply sufficiently proved that Louis was resolved to dispense with all pretext for a declaration of war. The States-General might at least take advantage of it to arouse the fears of the European courts concerning the King of France's schemes of conquest, and they hastened to send it to their ambassadors in England, Sweden, and Spain, with directions to make it public. There was no need of any further useless precautions, De Groot having sent them word that nothing was to be hoped in future from any negotiations, and there was nothing left for them but to await a rupture that could now be neither averted nor retarded.

Louis XIV. had in fact resolved to destroy the republic which his ancestor Henry IV. had so powerfully assisted to establish. Hitherto she had flourished under the patronage

of France, and had seemed almost a colony of hers. Commercial relations between the two nations had rapidly increased, so that many Dutch travellers were to be found even in the south of France. France, on the other hand, was in some sort represented in Holland by a tribe of French emigrants of every rank and every condition. Some came to enrich themselves by the gains of trade, which promised them a rapid fortune, or else like Descartes they found here a security favourable to study. Others, such as Cardinal de Retz, Saint Evremond, and the Prince of Tarentum, had taken refuge here after the troubles of the Fronde, in which they had been implicated. The town of Amsterdam alone contained more than 2,000 Frenchmen who had married and settled there. French actors gave performances at the Hague. This population of new-comers had familiarised the Dutch with the language, the customs, and tastes of their mother-country. To treat the republic of the United Provinces as an enemy to be defeated and destroyed was accordingly to mistake and endanger the interests of France. Louis XIV. was not to sacrifice them with impunity to his impatience for revenge. The Dutch war, by preparing the way for the elevation of the Prince who was to become his most formidable enemy, was destined to justify the predictions of the Grand Pensionary. De Witt had not been wrong when he pointed out to De Groot 'the dangerous effects which the approaching rupture with the King of France have already produced, and the injurious results which would ensue to his interests, the smouldering fire of the Prince of Orange's party having been re-kindled, and it not appearing possible again to extinguish it.' Despising the counsels of political prudence, Louis XIV. was about to strike a blow at the United Provinces which was fated to recoil upon himself, but he was too bent upon avenging on them the Triple Alliance, to give any check to the free course of his resentment, not foreseeing how he would one day come to repent it.

The relations of the United Provinces with England were preparing for them a grievous disappointment which was destined to be no less fatal. Charles II., whose hostility was all

the more dangerous that it was well concealed, had hitherto maintained the appearances of friendly feeling in his communications with John Boreel, the Dutch ambassador, and had shown himself no less kindly disposed towards Van Beuningen, who had been charged with a special mission to the court of London. Fearing lest the information they might give to their employers should be made use of to encourage internal dissensions in his kingdom, he had taken care to keep on good terms with them, for which he made excuses to Louis. Boreel and Van Beuningen had both allowed themselves to be deceived by this treacherous courtesy. Until the very eve of the declaration of war, Boreel continued to delude the States with assurances of peace. Van Beuningen was equally blind. On his return to the Hague in December 1670, he informed the States-General 'that on his arrival in London he had not found the court very well disposed, but that the journey of the Prince of Orange to England had been most favourable to the interests of the republic.' The hostility of the English people towards France seemed to him besides a sufficient guarantee against idle fears. He exhibited this confidence at the very moment when the King of England, satisfied that he had secured the integrity of the Netherlands, had come to an understanding with Louis XIV. for the dismemberment of the United Provinces.

The King of France was delighted with this blindness, which was notified to him by his ambassador at the Hague with eager satisfaction. 'Van Beuningen,' writes Pomponne, 'is quite full of the phantom belief that he rules the court of London. Only a few days since, I was so good as to accept some very ironical compliments that he made me in the manner in which England has turned round in our favour.' Lionne envied Pomponne the malicious pleasure which the latter could thus enjoy. 'I should greatly like to spend a quarter of an hour at the Hague,' he writes to him, 'that I might have a good laugh with you over all the wonders that such a clever man thinks he has accomplished in England for the service of his masters.' 'But,' he adds, 'the poor dupe will be furious when he sees the last scene of the comedy in

which he has so long played so pitiful a part.' In order to obtain clearer information, the Grand Pensionary had since Van Beuningen's return vainly urged upon Boreel to take measures to 'find out what engagements Charles had entered into with Louis in order to leave the King of France free to act as he pleased.' The letters he received from the Dutch ambassador in Paris completed his deception. Although De Groot, who could not be suspected of partiality for Charles II., did not conceal from him that he had little to expect from such an ally, he could not believe that the States had any aggression on his part to fear. 'If the King of England does us no good,' he writes, 'at least he will not do us much harm, being too fond of louis d'or to do the former, and too much in awe of his people to venture upon the latter.' The certainty expressed by a diplomatist so highly considered, soothed the alarms of the Grand Pensionary. Having concluded the Triple Alliance only three years before, De Witt could not persuade himself that his great diplomatic work was fated to be of such ephemeral duration. Trusting to the assurances given him by De Groot, he depended upon the nation and the Parliament to prevent Charles from sacrificing the interests of his kingdom to the French alliance.

The expressions of public opinion and the votes of Parliament seemed to give grounds for his opinion. The English people rejected with alarm and indignation the idea of a fresh war with the United Provinces. Not only did they fear the cost, and also consider it fatal to their commerce, but they thought the independence of England endangered by union with France, which would make Louis XIV. the master of Europe. They were alarmed besides by an alliance which must inevitably encourage Charles in undertakings that were menacing to the Protestant faith and the public freedom.

Parliament exhibited the same suspicions and the same fears, and the Government found itself obliged to pay some heed to them. At the opening of the session the Lord Keeper Bridgeman asked for the funds necessary for the armaments which were to be opposed to those of France. Uneasy at the journey of Louis into Flanders, Parliament hastened to vote

credits amounting to 800,000*l.* for the equipment of a fleet of fifty ships. The States-General were convinced that Parliament would not allow this money to be turned to any other purpose, and had no suspicion that the liberality of Louis had already placed other funds at the disposal of Charles. The Triple Alliance seemed to them accordingly to be safe from attack, in spite of any wish of Charles to break it, so long as Parliament remained its guardian, and by its power of voting the taxes kept the English Government dependent upon it.

The policy imposed upon them henceforth was necessarily therefore one of conciliation, which must be maintained to prevent the King of England from infecting the nation with his own hostile feelings towards the republic. British pride had of necessity been offended by the outburst of popular joy and patriotic pride which the Chatham expedition had provoked in the United Provinces. Books, lampoons, pictures, medals, all had been employed to perpetuate the memory of a victory which had brought to a glorious end the war with England. The book called 'Belgium gloriosum,' published in Latin and Dutch by the pastor Jacques Leydius, had made a great sensation. A picture—at the foot of which a haughty inscription was prominently placed, and which represented Cornelius de Witt, the States Commissioner with the fleet, crowned by Victory before the English ships burnt at Chatham—adorned the town hall at Dordrecht. The 'Royal Charles,' which had been captured, was anchored in the roadstead off Helvoetsluys, near the mouth of the Meuse, as if for the purpose of public exhibition. The States-General had hitherto been content with preventing the insolent boldness of Captain van Brakel from giving ground for complaint to the English Government. The English ambassador having complained of his conduct in hoisting with the flag of the republic the pennants and standards which he had seized at Chatham, the States-General had lost no time in sending him orders to give up these trophies, and had returned them to London.

Charles II., who only sought for occasions of conflict with the States-General, accused them of continuing their provocations. In a letter written to Temple after the return of the

English ambassador to London, the Grand Pensionary vainly endeavours to limit the scope of the King of England's complaints. 'I could wish,' he writes, 'that on neither side had there appeared lampoons, verses, or medals which could give offence, and that no more thought might be bestowed upon the accidents of a war the remembrance of which should be banished for ever. I freely confess that in this country too much licence is taken in some things, although, after very close inquiry, it has not been found that the libels most complained of were printed in this province. You, sir, and all those like you, are above what you rightly call trifles, and you will take notice only of the real intentions of the State, in which the King will always find all the respect that he can desire.'

The King of England paid no attention to these explanations, and with still greater haughtiness demanded prompt satisfaction for his complaints. De Witt in return expressed both surprise and displeasure; he recalled the fact that all states, whether monarchies or republics, had always celebrated their victories by pictures and medals. 'It seems,' he writes to Van Beuningen, 'as if the English Government must be determined upon hostility towards us to resort to such complaints. We cannot understand how a foreign monarch can pretend to lay down the law to a free republic. Moreover, the medals have not the offensive character attributed to them, and the figures represented upon them have no pretension to a likeness which could convert them into an effigy of the King of England. Neither is it true that the "Royal Charles" is shown for money, or that it has been made into an alehouse where success is drunk to the future war, a subject in which we should have no reason to congratulate ourselves.'

A debate with closed doors was held in the States of Holland upon the concessions which might be made. Notwithstanding the opposition of the nobles and of several towns, who, according to Pomponne, did not choose to despoil themselves in time of peace of the tokens of glory won in the war, the States determined, but without debate and merely in the form of a discussion, 'that measures of temporisation must be used

towards England.' All copies of certain lampoons were seized, the dies of several medals were broken, and the States had the arms withdrawn from the 'Royal Charles' and the name changed. In his notification of these friendly proceedings to Boreel in London, the Grand Pensionary desired him to make the most of them as so many tokens of a conciliatory policy, although he feared that they would make England more exacting.

To prevent Parliament taking these advances into account, Charles endeavoured to fix on the States-General the accusation of secret proposals for coming to an understanding with France. The Grand Pensionary considered it the more incumbent upon him to answer such accusations that they were especially intended to apply to himself, he having, it was said, sent a confidential messenger to the court of France to induce him to take up arms against England. He wrote about this matter, a few months afterwards, to Boreel in the strongest terms and with unusual irritation: 'Having conjectured,' he writes, 'that the extravagant language said yonder to have been used by a minister might very possibly apply to me, I have since learnt, with some surprise, from your last missive, the effrontery displayed in this affair by the French newswriters, and the thoughtlessness with which this has been accepted. As to what I am said to have written directly or indirectly to Paris, and signed with a different name in two or more successive letters, to lay before the King of France some points which might serve as the basis for a closer treaty to the prejudice of England, I beg you to make known that no such letters can ever be produced, and so confound the inventors of such falsehoods by a direct denial. Although such untruths from their very nature can only be refuted by a formal contradiction (for it is impossible to prove a negative), I can, however, oppose to them a despatch written by me on the subject of the appointment of Monsieur de Pomponne as Minister of State. As you will observe, I appended to my congratulations an expression of my great hope that Monsieur de Pomponne, before his departure from Sweden, might find means to pave the way for a general alliance between

France on the one hand, and England, Sweden, and this State closely bound together on the other, which to my mind abundantly proves that I have had no thought of renewing our friendship with France to the prejudice of England.' The Grand Pensionary adds with well-merited sarcasm: 'It were to be wished that, on the part of England, as little negotiation were being carried on with France to the prejudice of this State as is the case with their High Mightinesses, for it is common to impute to others the faults we commit ourselves.'

The States-General could not better prove their sincerity to Charles than by sending him fresh proposals for an alliance especially intended to reassure Parliament. Not allowing themselves to be repelled by his unfriendliness, they represented to him 'that, unless he wished to reduce them to dependence upon the King of France, the King of England should concert with them measures of defence for both nations, and assent to a mutual pledge to break with the enemy who should attack one or other of the allies.' Instead of receiving these advances favourably, Charles declared that the States-General ought in the first place to offer him subsidies. De Witt was not disposed to grant them. 'The best thing for us to do,' he writes to the ambassador Boreel, 'is to employ our money in ships and soldiers for our defence.' The States-General refused to yield to these demands. They were informed, moreover, that Charles would not content himself with them, and that, unless they made over to him the towns of Brill and Flushing, which would open to him by sea the entrance into the United Provinces, they had nothing to expect from England.

All hope of retaining the English alliance was ended by the final recall of Sir William Temple. On his departure from the Hague, after the invasion of Lorraine by Louis XIV., Temple had received instructions to leave his wife and his establishment behind him, in order thus to confirm the assurance of his return, which was constantly demanded by the Grand Pensionary. His urgency becoming importunate to Charles, the King informed the States-General that Temple would not be sent back to the Hague, and that he proposed shortly to

send over a successor to him. 'His Majesty,' writes Arlington to the English ambassador in Spain, 'wishes for some one who will show more firmness than he has done in forcing the Dutch to give him satisfaction on several points relating to trade, instead of taking pains to invent new methods of embarrassing him in his political engagements to his prejudice.' The Grand Pensionary, in his discouragement, wrote to Temple to impart to him his melancholy thoughts. In the letter which he addressed to him he expresses his acknowledgments for the pleasant terms on which they had been during his stay at the Hague, and for the visits paid to him by Lady Temple since her husband's departure, and gives free vent to his regrets for being no longer able to enjoy the honour of his conversation or the charm of his correspondence. 'Believe me,' he concludes, 'that one of the things that I most ardently desire is to see you again.'

By recalling Temple, Charles II. proposed not merely to signify to the United Provinces that they must no longer count upon the Triple Alliance, but in particular he was seeking cause for a rupture. He had despatched the 'Merlin,' a yacht belonging to the English navy, to bring back the ambassador's wife, who had not hitherto received permission to rejoin her husband. Captain Caron, who was charged with this mission, received orders to sail through the Dutch fleet that was then cruising in the Channel, and to fire at the ships nearest to him until he made them haul down their flag or until they fired at him again. These instructions were communicated to the French ambassador, who writes to Louis XIV.: 'The captain is to use all his powder so as to give good cause for a quarrel.'

A conflict was inevitable, as no justification could be offered for the pretension to make a whole fleet dip their ensigns to a yacht, nor any ground for it be found in existing treaties. On her way to Holland the yacht passed the Dutch fleet, but was unable to execute the orders that had been given on account of the violence of the wind, which obliged her to keep at a distance. But it was not so on the return passage. On August 24, 1671, the yacht, with the royal standard flying

from her mainmast, came upon the Dutch fleet at anchor, six leagues from the coast of Zealand and sixteen from the English shore. Her captain fired from a distance several shots at their flagship, which not being able to reply at once, on account of the storm having laid her on her beam ends, Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent, believing that it was merely a question of a salute, took the place of Ruyter and returned it in the customary manner, but received in reply a discharge of cannon-balls. Surprised by such a proceeding, he sent an officer on board the yacht to ask for an explanation. The English captain informed him that he had fired because the Dutch flag had not been hauled down, and declared that he had orders to make the Dutch fleet dip ensigns wherever he met it. The officer who carried back this answer to Van Ghent told him that Lady Temple was on board the yacht. Van Ghent, who, at the Hague, had often visited the ambassador's wife, took the opportunity of paying his compliments to her in order to have a personal interview with the captain. Having come on board he represented to Captain Caron that he could not concede his claim without an express order from the States, and tried also to persuade him how unjustifiable it was, and that it ought at any rate to be submitted to the inquiry of the two governments. Fearing, perhaps, to have exceeded his orders, and not caring to get himself into trouble, the captain thought it best to consult with Lady Temple in the hope that she would dissuade him from proceeding further. 'He came to my wife,' writes Temple to his father in relating this adventure to him, 'and desired to know what she pleased he should do in the case; which she saw he did not like very well, and would be glad to get out of by her help. She told him he knew his orders best, and what he was to do upon them; which she left to him to follow as he thought fit, without any regard to her or her children.' However, after firing one more shot at one of the smaller vessels in the squadron, the English captain thought it best to continue on his way peaceably, contenting himself with the demonstration he had made.

The English court, whose plan was already decided upon,

pretended indignation against Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent, but were secretly delighted at having raised up this dispute. While the Dutch ambassador, Boreel, timidly protested that it was only a misunderstanding which might be cleared up, Charles declared to him that he considered Van Ghent's conduct to have been premeditated. He thought thus to persuade the English that they had received an affront, and was in good hopes that by appealing to the national pride he might easily drag the country into a declaration of war. The captain of the yacht, far from being disavowed, was sent to the Tower for having consented to any discussion as to the salute of the flag, which he ought to have insisted upon at his risk and peril, and it was debated in the Privy Council whether a frigate should not be despatched to the Dutch fleet with orders to make every ship dip her ensign, and to fire upon them in case of refusal at the risk of being sunk. 'And thus,' writes Temple to his father, 'an adventure has ended in smoke which had for almost three years made much noise in the world, restored and preserved so long the general peace, and left his Majesty the arbitrage of all affairs among his neighbours. . . . The Dutch ministers at court, as ill noses as they have, began to smell the powder after the captain's shooting. . . .' The States-General, indignant at exactions which seemed to them both iniquitous and inadmissible, resolved to meet it by a manifesto which should do them justice. The members of the naval committee were instructed to consult for this purpose with the Commissioners of the Admiralties, and submit the proposal to them. In conformity with the conclusions arrived at in this document, the States declared that by the terms of the treaties appealed to by the English Government, 'the saluting of the flags should be regulated in future as it had been in the past,' and could not therefore be claimed except in British waters, where it was offered as a mark of courtesy, without any right being conceded to England to presume upon it as recognising her claims to the sovereignty of the seas. To avoid misunderstanding, Ruyter was instructed to draw up a set of rules prescribing the salutes to be given by the fleet in case of

meeting English or French vessels on the Dutch coast, which were to be confined to firing guns without the lowering of the flag.

Charles replied to this communication from the States-General by appointing Sir George Downing ambassador extraordinary to the Hague. He could not have made a choice more hostile to the republic. Not only had Downing the well-deserved reputation of being the most quarrelsome diplomatist of his day, but he had made himself notorious in the service, by turns, of Cromwell and of Charles II. for the enmity he had constantly displayed to the United Provinces. 'He seems to have no other mission,' writes De Groot to De Witt, 'than that of seeking a pretext for a rupture, instead of a means of settling the difficulty.' Negotiations carried on by him, therefore, could not be serious, and judging from the instructions given to him were meant to serve only as a preface to a declaration of war.

At the same time, Charles, whose armaments were not yet completed, skilfully turned to account the credulity of the Dutch ambassador, attempting in spite of appearances to lull the States again into security. Before leaving London, Downing charged Boreel to assure his masters that, if he had formerly had the misfortune to treat with the republic under painful circumstances, he would now make up for it in conformity with the new orders he had received, protesting that he was only going to the Hague in a pacific spirit, and with the design of strengthening the good understanding between the two nations. At the same time the King of England sent word to the States-General that, being informed of the aggression with which they were threatened by France, he was sending Downing to the Hague to offer his mediation to the republic, that he was making a similar proposal to Louis XIV., and that if he did not succeed in obtaining its acceptance he should none the less fulfil all the stipulations of the Triple Alliance. 'The States have received letters from their ambassador in England,' writes the French agent who had remained at the Hague, 'to the effect that he has made fresh appeals to the King of Great Britain to be informed of the real intentions of his Majesty;

upon which his Majesty had replied that if this State were attacked, to the prejudice of the last treaty of alliance, he would assist it, which has caused such rejoicing here as is not to be believed,'

The Grand Pensionary could no longer share this confidence. After long clinging to the hope of placing the English Parliament in opposition to the King, he heard that it had been set aside. Not choosing to ask for fresh subsidies, Charles, to avoid the resistance he foresaw, had prorogued Parliament and did not summon it again for eighteen months. He was thus left in some embarrassment for want of funds; but he was not long in finding means to procure them. The pecuniary advantages which he had always gained from the French alliance not appearing to him sufficient, he obtained permission from Louis to employ for the equipment of his fleet the sum which he had received for the levy of a body of 6,000 men, which he was dispensed from setting on foot. The subsidies which had been granted by Parliament in the preceding year not being sufficient to re-establish the equilibrium of his finances, he had recourse moreover to a species of bankruptcy to complete his warlike preparations.

A royal proclamation of January 2, 1672, announced the suspension of exchequer payments for a year, in consideration of a promise to the creditors of accounting for the interest due to them at six per cent. By this iniquitous proceeding a sum of about a million and a half was placed at the disposal of the Government. The failure of several banks and the ruin of many bondholders were the consequences of this faithlessness of the King to his financial engagements. Not only did he deal a dangerous blow to the commercial credit of England, but he compromised the royal prestige, and commenced opening that gulf between the court and the country which was destined to be hereafter enlarged.

As soon as he was sure of the necessary funds for the execution of his plans, Charles thought himself no longer obliged to conceal them. Having demanded a solemn audience of the States-General, Downing repaired to their assembly with a train of more than one hundred persons. He began by com-

plaining of the insults offered to the King, his master, for which he demanded prompt and full reparation, thereby causing great surprise. Van Ghent, the deputy of Guelders, who was president of the sitting, replied that the friendship of England had been always greatly valued by the United Provinces, and that they were determined to observe the treaties concluded between the two nations. He added that if Charles II. professed to be offended, the States would endeavour to give him all reasonable satisfaction, as soon as they knew the particulars of the affronts mentioned. Downing was not satisfied with this reply, and demanded a second audience. The States-General sent him word that they would appoint commissioners to treat with him. Instead of contenting himself with this mark of good-will, Downing presented to the States a haughty note in which he put forth fresh demands. Not only did he claim the prompt and effectual punishment of Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent for his conduct in refusing to lower the Dutch flag to an English yacht, but he also demanded an official recognition of the right of the King of England to the sovereignty of the seas in all waters, thus requiring that the States-General should in future hold themselves bound to dip their ensigns, even of the whole fleet, to the English men-of-war, whatever their number or rank. It was in fact asking them to acknowledge themselves subjects of Charles. The conferences which were at once begun between Downing and the deputies of the States could not bring about an agreement, notwithstanding the unanswerable arguments brought forward by the latter, which left no doubt as to the meaning of the treaties fallaciously invoked by the King of England.

Downing, seeing that the discussion could do him no good, intimated his refusal to allow any debate as to a right which he said he was instructed to insist upon, asserting that the King of England held to it no less than to his crown. Impatient to force matters to a conclusion, he suddenly announced while the conferences were still pending that he had just received instructions to demand his passports. In this extremity, the States-General sought to save

the republic by a final sacrifice, hard as it was to them. Their ambassador Boreel, whose blindness was incurable, never ceased to represent to them that by yielding as to the flag, they would indispose the English nation for war, England being inclined to peace from enmity to France. At the same time he held out hopes to them that further advantages granted to the Prince of Orange might reconcile them with the King of England. He warned them that in default of this double satisfaction the treaty between France and England, in which he had hitherto refused to believe, would take effect.

The States of Holland and the States-General allowed themselves to be again duped by these illusions. The Grand Pensionary represented to them that, on the eve of an imminent rupture with France, no concession which might rally England to the alliance of the republic was to be regretted. He proposed therefore to intimate to Downing that the States-General yielded to the question of the saluting the flag according to the King of England's claim, adding that they considered it as a mark of deference to a potent monarch, the faithful ally of the republic, and as involving no prejudice to their freedom of commerce and navigation. To secure to the republic the benefit of a compliance thus pushed to its furthest limit, De Witt, faithful to the policy which had dictated all his despatches to Boreel, instructed the ambassador to declare that the States-General would pledge themselves to no such engagement unless assured by the King of England of the execution of the Triple Alliance, or without first obtaining his promise of assistance in the event of France attacking the United Provinces. If such advances should not produce a favourable response, Charles must renounce all hope of deceiving them as to his intentions.

Downing did not hesitate to refuse. He declared that the offers came too late, and asserting that his powers had just been revoked, quitted the Hague, not venturing to remain there exposed to the vengeance of the populace, who looked upon him as the foe of all alliance between England and the republic. This precipitancy did not suit the views of the King of England. Charles feared that the States, if once

convinced that they had no further terms to keep, might press forward the equipment of their ships and get the start of him by a declaration of war followed up by a prompt attack. To gain time, he disavowed the proceedings of his ambassador, and carried dissimulation so far as to throw him into prison and deprive him of his office. Boreel allowed himself to be deceived by Downing's temporary disgrace, and still continued to encourage the illusions of the States. Although he dared not refrain from making known to them the growing demands of Charles, he endeavoured to persuade them that an ambassador extraordinary might have sufficient credit to make the King more tractable, and he persisted in writing to them that the arrival of such an envoy might bring about a suspension of the engagements between the courts of England and France.

The States were unwilling to turn a deaf ear to this last appeal. They still hoped that this persistency might bring back the English nation to the Dutch alliance, and thus prevent a declaration of war. Having first offered the special mission to Beverningh, who, expecting no success from it, refused the appointment, they made choice of Meerman, who had already been their representative in London. They instructed him to renew their offers concerning the flag, and to let it be known that they would go so far as to dismiss Admiral van Ghent and replace him by Tromp: this last concession having been agreed to in spite of the opposition of the States of Holland. They entrusted Meerman also with a letter addressed to Charles, in which they informed him of the resolutions just passed in favour of the Prince of Orange, by his appointment as captain- and admiral-general, hoping that this concession in favour of the King's nephew might prevent a rupture. To help forward the success of the negotiations, they authorised, but too late, the employment of considerable sums intended directly for the King's privy purse. They hoped by these means to gain the neutrality and mediation of England, if not her assistance. 'The Dutch,' writes a correspondent to Condé, 'are in consternation at the English ambassador's determination to take his leave, and they have sent off expresses to

London with many offers of submission. It is not yet known what may be the result of all this.

In order not to expose themselves to a fresh affront, the States had desired Meerman to await the effect of his first steps before declaring himself as ambassador extraordinary. Meerman, however, lost no time in demanding an audience, at which he presented himself accompanied by Boreel. He announced to Charles that the States had instructed him to demand the execution of the treaties, and to come to an understanding about the flag. The King evaded all reply, and merely expressed surprise at not receiving a signed paper. The two ambassadors hastened to transmit that which they had drawn up to the English commissioners, Arlington and Lauderdale, and requested them to examine it first. The latter replied haughtily that it was not their business to draw up diplomatic notes; and on the day fixed for the conference, taking no account of the written engagement which settled the question of the salute of the flag according to the English demand, they broke off the interview, declaring that the time for negotiation was past.

Thus was notified to the States-General the defection of Charles II. All the efforts made by the Grand Pensionary had failed, and the alliance entered into four years previously between the United Provinces and England was now to be followed by a declaration of war. The league which they had hoped to oppose to Louis XIV. could no longer protect them, and they were in their turn threatened by the vengeance of the King of France with a coalition which must place them at his mercy. Having freed themselves from the yoke of Spain, against whom they had entered into a most unequal conflict, they were now to be reduced to defend their independence against the two most powerful monarchies of Europe, to whom it seemed that they were fated to succumb, but against whom they were to maintain an indomitable resistance.

CHAPTER XI.

DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION AND MILITARY WEAKNESS—ALLIANCES AND PREPARATIONS FOR DEFENCE.

Fallacious security of the States-General—They let slip from them the Swedish alliance—Van Haren's negotiations—Treaty of neutrality between Sweden and France—Engagements of the Emperor of Germany with Louis XIV.—The German Princes won over to the French alliance—Negotiations of the States-General with the Princes of the House of Brunswick—Treaty of the King of France with the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne—Vain attempts of John de Witt to assist the town of Cologne against the Elector—The States-General obtain the support of the Elector of Brandenburg—Negotiations of their envoy Amerongen—Diplomatic diversion attempted by the Elector of Mayence—The conquest of Egypt suggested to Louis XIV.—Relations of the States-General with the court of Spain—Embassy of Beverningh to Madrid—Treaty of assistance—Conferences at Brussels—Great part taken in them by the Grand Pensionary and his brother—Neglect of their defences by the United Provinces—Disarmament—Disputes between the States of Holland and the States-General as to the disbanding of some companies—State of the army—Military weakness—Restoration of the highest commands—Prince John Maurice of Nassau and Major-General Wurtz—Imprudent confidence of the Grand Pensionary—His tardy commencement of the defensive preparations—Slowness of the deliberations—Opposition of Zealand—Concord restored by De Witt—Financial measures—Unsuccessful attempts to create new taxes—The combinations of annuities studied by De Witt—His reports to the States of Holland—Successive loans—Creation of pecuniary resources—Result of the financial administration of the Grand Pensionary—Pacification of internal divisions undertaken by De Witt—Fagel appointed Secretary of the States-General—Van Beuningen sent as ambassador to London—Hoofdt, burgomaster of Amsterdam—Renewed disputes—Proposal to appoint the Prince of Orange captain-general—Impolitic resistance offered by De Witt—The States of Holland split into two parties—Vote for the commission of the captain-general—Disagreement on the question of a life-command—Compromise arranged by De Witt—Proclamation of the Prince of Orange as captain-general—Public rejoicings—Harmony only restored in appearance—Organisation of the military staff—The deputies in the camp—The command of the fleet continued to Ruyter—His lieutenant-admirals—Cornelius de Witt delegated to him by the States-General—Committee for naval affairs—It is presided over by John de Witt—Naval armaments—Effective force of

the army—New levies—De Witt's repeated demands for them—Reserve forces—Insufficiency of the defensive preparations—Last years of the domestic life of John de Witt—His widowerhood—His house—His family relations—His children—Their education—Subsequent fate of his sons and daughters—Cornelius de Witt at Dordrecht—Offices and honours conferred upon him—His character—His relations with John de Witt—His wife, Maria van Berkel—His children—Common fate of the two brothers.

The States-General had taken no measures to turn aside the dangers which threatened them. They had too easily persuaded themselves that they had only to preserve the Netherlands to Spain in order to secure the independence of the United Provinces. Believing that the safety of the republic was assured, they neglected to profit by their financial resources to obtain the protection and assistance of their allies. They would have liked Spain to pay the costs of their defence, and the Grand Pensionary remarks sorrowfully on their refusal to consent to pecuniary engagements. 'The conviction is forced upon me,' he writes, 'that their High Mightinesses will not consent to promise subsidies to anyone, unless, in the event of war, the troops for which the subsidies were promised were put into the field at once, and that they will never, in time of peace, merely for fear of a rupture, take a definite resolution beforehand to make any preliminary sacrifice of money.' 'It is the character of the Dutch,' he writes in another letter, 'unless danger is staring them in the face to be disinclined to make any sacrifices for their own defence.' He protested that he had to deal with people 'who were liberal to profusion when they ought to be sparing, and were often economical to avarice when they ought to spend their money.'

The States were equally parsimonious as to bribing the principal ministers at certain courts who might have been of use to them. They were suspicious of venal services, and whilst the Kings of France and England maintained, even in the Federal Assembly, spies who had been convicted in a court of justice of giving up official papers; whilst they surrounded the deputies with such a network of intrigue that, as a measure of precaution, it was necessary to forbid the latter living or dining at inns; the States-General thought it

extravagant to employ those presents and largesses which, according to the code of diplomatic morals of that day, were effectual and often indispensable means for the success of negotiations. One of their most sagacious ministers, De Groot, did not hesitate, in his private correspondence, to blame this conduct. 'We are very wrong,' he writes to Wicquefort, 'to expect good offices from everybody, and to confer benefits upon no one. This rigid virtue which it is desired to practise in Holland is, no doubt, very proper; but it is not well-timed, and is suitable only to those who can stand alone, without need of other aid. France is much wiser; she gives on all sides, and everywhere buys what she cannot conquer.'

This policy of ill-judged economy was to cost the States-General dear, and was fated to lose them the alliance of Sweden, for which Louis XIV. outbid them. The court of Sweden, during the king's minority, was a prey to intrigues and always ready to be bought by the highest bidder. 'Jealous of a share in the affairs of Europe,' writes Pomponne, 'Sweden delighted in seeing herself sought on all sides, without the intention of entering into a real engagement with anyone, and found her advantage in such a line of conduct.' 'When one has made any stay at Stockholm,' writes the French ambassador, Courtin, 'the vanity of these northern Gascons becomes pretty well known, and the extent also of their necessities.' During his embassy at Stockholm, De Groot had never ceased to write home in the same strain. 'Matters are at such a pass,' he writes, 'they must have money and that from foreign sources, and whoever provides them with it will carry the day over whoever does not.' The United Provinces were to discover to their cost how well-grounded was this anticipation.

The participation of Sweden in the Triple Alliance had encouraged the States-General in their illusions, and her first refusal of the pecuniary offers of Louis XIV. had completely reassured them. They gave themselves up to a fallacious security, and recalling Peter de Groot from Stockholm to send him as ambassador to France, neglected his advice, and contented themselves with being represented in Sweden by

their ordinary resident, Nicholas Heinsius, from whom little service could be expected. Son of the great philologer of the seventeenth century, Heinsius had devoted himself from his boyhood to Latin poetry, was famed for his editions of Virgil, Ovid, and Claudian, and was more concerned to render a brilliant idea into good Latin verse than to watch the proceedings of foreign ministers. Content to have held for sixteen years the same diplomatic post, which he owed to the patronage of Queen Christina, and which brought him a salary of 4,000 florins, he was bent upon maintaining himself there by giving the most reassuring information in his despatches, but he had no influence at the court of Stockholm nor any knowledge of what was taking place there.

Convinced that the assistance of Sweden was necessary to them to secure the safety of the Netherlands and thus to support the Spanish monarchy, the States-General had imperiously demanded from Spain the payment of the sums that she had promised to the Swedish Government, under the terms of the conventions of the Triple Alliance. Thanks to the urgent and skilful persuasions of their ambassador in Spain, Beverningh, they even obtained payment, in anticipation, of the subsidies which were to provide for the despatch of a Swedish contingent, in case of a renewal of the war between Spain and France; and they persuaded themselves that they might in future dispose of Sweden at the cost of the Spanish Government. Their expectations were soon to be deceived. Sweden having got all she could expect from Spain, and not reckoning upon pecuniary assistance from the States-General, began to look to France for relief.

With this object the Grand Chancellor requested Louis XIV. to send back to Stockholm his former ambassador, the Marquis de Pomponne, and declared to the French resident that if France would treat with them in accordance with former procedure, he saw every probability of a great success. Louis XIV. eagerly welcomed this unexpected overture. Pomponne was summoned into Flanders, where the King of France was making a military inspection, informed of his appointment as ambassador to Sweden, and sent back to the Hague to take

leave of the States-General. His instructions, minutely prepared by Lionne, acquainted him with the line of negotiation which he was to adopt with the Swedish Government. He was desired to obtain, in consideration of French subsidies, and by means of pecuniary gratifications which he was authorised to distribute, the assistance of a force of 16,000 men for the purpose of taking up arms against any princes of the Empire who should attempt to come to the aid of the United Provinces.

On his arrival at Stockholm, Pomponne opened a conference with the Grand Chancellor, Magnus de la Gardie, who, faithful to the French alliance, received his proposals favourably. The Chancellor had, however, a powerful adversary in the Grand Treasurer, Stein Bilk, who was under the influence of the Spanish ambassador, Fernando Nuñez. The commissioners appointed by the Senate took fright at the projects for the destruction of the republic. Alarmed at the ambitious designs of Louis, they began to delay and temporise. Pomponne skilfully avoided any appearance of haste, and to further the issue of the negotiations consented not to insist upon a rupture between the States-General and Sweden, and renounced a demand which would have opposed an insuperable obstacle in the way of any agreement.

This difficulty having been disposed of, the Grand Chancellor thought he might confidently appeal to the Senate. But in a formal sitting at which the young King Charles XII. took his place, the debate which arose nearly upset everything again. 'It was necessary,' the Chancellor declared to Pomponne, 'to fight hard to put down the senators who were opposed to French offers. The promise of assistance of a force of 16,000 men, which was to be despatched into Germany at the first requisition of the King of France, was at last given. But it was made subject to the grant of a subsidy of 600,000 crowns, which Pomponne was only empowered to offer in the event of Sweden bringing her contingent into the field, failing which he only offered 200,000 crowns. After conferences vainly prolonged for a week, being no longer able to put off entering upon his office of Secretary of State for Foreign

Affairs, Pomponne endeavoured before leaving Stockholm to induce the Senate to come to a definite resolution upon the eventual clauses of the treaty. But he was obliged to consent to the postponement of its signature until his appointed successor, Courtin, should have received the King's orders either to conclude the negotiations or to break them off.

The alliance of Sweden with France was thus held in suspense, and the States-General might still hope to avert it. The Grand Pensionary was not taken unawares by the news of its imminent accomplishment. The letters which De Groot had written to him before leaving Stockholm had acquainted him with the secret negotiations of the court of France. He had in consequence never ceased to call upon the States-General to take measures to preserve the alliance which threatened to slip through their fingers. It was necessary without further delay to fill up the vacancy in the embassy. As Van Beuningen refused it, Cornelius de Witt consented to accept it. But he had incurred the jealousy of some deputies of the Assembly of Holland, who were enemies of himself and his family. Envious of the town of Dordrecht, of which the Grand Pensionary and his brother, the Secretary of the Council of State, Slingelandt, and the former Secretary of the States-General, Ruysch, were all natives, they ironically remarked that it seemed intended to give to that town alone the priviledge of producing great men, and they required that the choice should be left to other towns. The States of Holland could find no other candidate to present, but Cornelius de Witt, once rejected, would not let himself be tempted by any fresh offers. The States-General then addressed themselves to Van Haren, deputy of Friesland, who had every claim to their confidence.

At the age of twenty-four Van Haren had been a member of the Grand Assembly of 1650, which had changed the government of the United Provinces, and had since filled several important offices. Successively appointed Grand Master of Domains and member of the Council of State, he had been charged, during the Northern war, with negotiations for peace between Denmark and Sweden, and elected by

the States of Friesland as their deputy in ordinary to the States-General. After accompanying De Witt to the Texel, during the second war with England, he had been sent on a mission to the Elector of Brandenburg. His embassy to Sweden was now to give him an opportunity of employing in the service of his country the resources of great intelligence and tried patriotism.

His instructions directed him to inform the Swedish Government of the causes for complaint and alarm that France had given to the United Provinces, by putting an interdict upon their commerce and threatening them with an approaching rupture. He was to represent to them that it was the Triple Alliance which had exposed the States-General to the resentment of Louis XIV., and that, accordingly, it gave the republic the right to appeal to the allies for assistance. To obtain this Van Haren was authorised to offer subsidies that should be at least equal to those promised by the King of France, and was empowered to promise a sum of 720,000 crowns to be paid in four half-yearly instalments. The States-General also took upon themselves the final instalments due of the war subsidies promised by the court of Madrid to Sweden for the preservation of the Netherlands, and of which Spain seemed unable to continue the payment. These proposals, tardy though they were, very nearly succeeded and seemed likely to produce a change in the aspect of affairs, by breaking off the engagements entered into by Sweden with the King of France. On the urgent advice of Pomponne, Louis determined to forestall them by empowering Courtin, his new ambassador at Stockholm, to satisfy the demands of the Swedish Government, and he instructed him to double the subsidy offered to Sweden, and raise it to 400,000 crowns.

Van Haren did not despair yet of achieving success in the mission entrusted to him. In his conferences with the commissioners from the Senate who were charged to negotiate with him, he pointed out to them the aggressive preparations of Louis XIV., and the dangers incurred by all Europe from his ambition and his contempt for treaties. He made the most of the alliance concluded by the States-General with

Spain, and of that for which they were in treaty with the Elector of Brandenburg, alluded to the opposition of the English nation to the alliance between Charles and Louis, and urged the Swedish regency not to be indifferent to a cause which was their own. Having received private information that a report had been agreed upon in favour of the signature of a treaty with France, he induced the envoys of Spain, of Brandenburg, and of several German princes to make an urgent remonstrance to the commissioners to dissuade them from the step on which they had resolved. At the same time, profiting by the latitude allowed him, to be used only at the last extremity, he offered as the price of Swedish intervention 720,000 crowns yearly, to be paid in a lump sum and in advance. When the commissioners reported this proposal to the Senate on the following day, the partisans of France appeared disconcerted. The Grand Chancellor, whose habit it was in difficult cases to retire from the scene, prepared to leave Stockholm for the country. The champions of the Triple Alliance resumed confidence. The Senate appeared disposed to accept the offers of Van Haren, and only sought a pretext to release themselves from their engagements with France. 'I did not think,' writes Courtin, 'that I ought to commit myself any further with people who have no respect for their written or spoken word.'

It seemed then as if Van Haren might reckon upon the most unexpected chances of success. His hopes would perhaps have been better founded if he could have secured by liberality the good-will of the Grand Chancellor. He complained later 'that he had not been instructed to offer him any considerable present, although it was only by such means that he could expect to obtain his good offices.' He had, besides, not received sufficient powers to settle finally the various concessions relative to trade and navigation which Sweden desired to obtain from the United Provinces. Unable to grant these without asking and obtaining permission from the States, he could merely promise that 'the reply should be such as they would desire.' These delays allowed the French ambassador to receive fresh instructions, by which he was

ordered to give the commissioners the choice between the two words 'sign' and 'go,' and himself to act accordingly. The Senate having again met, Van Haren vainly endeavoured to secure the neutrality of Sweden. Thanks to the urgent advice of the Grand Chancellor, the French ambassador succeeded in obtaining consent to the treaty, as it had previously been concluded with Pomponne. Three weeks later it was ratified at Versailles and became definitive.

'We shall have,' writes the Dutch ambassador, sadly, 'to suffice to ourselves in the first campaign.' Van Haren had only succeeded in thwarting the French ambassador's measures for a time; he could not foil them entirely. Courtin, in announcing his success, acknowledges himself 'that the difficulties he had hitherto encountered were flowers in comparison with the thorns he had recently met with.' By averting a rupture between Sweden and the United Provinces, Van Haren had, however, notwithstanding the apparent failure of his embassy, rendered a signal service to the States-General. He had secured for them the continuance of diplomatic relations with the court of Stockholm, which were soon to enable him to bring about a change in the policy of Sweden favourable to the republic.

None the less, the defection of Sweden completed the isolation of the United Provinces. It was the aim which Louis had never ceased to pursue throughout all his negotiations. He had succeeded in it by the promises, either of neutrality or of assistance, that he had obtained from the Emperor of Germany and the German princes on the one hand, and on the other from the Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster.

The States-General were abandoned by the Emperor in spite of the fluctuations of the French alliance at Vienna, of which they had failed to take advantage. Leopold I. had only desired to join the Triple Alliance in order to guarantee to Spain the possession of the Netherlands. From the moment when Louis XIV. threatened not the Netherlands but the United Provinces, he had no wish to get himself into trouble by assisting them, notwithstanding the urgent remonstrances of their envoy, Hamel Bruyninex. He preferred to assure the tranquillity of

his dominions, threatened, not only by an invasion of the Turks, but by a revolt in Hungary which he had just put down by means of the most sanguinary executions. But the haughty refusal with which Louis XIV. had met the representations of Count Windischgrätz in favour of the Duke of Lorraine, who had been despoiled of his dominions by the King of France, and the secret encouragement given by the French to the disturbances in Hungary, had irritated and alienated the court of Vienna. While the negotiations were still being protracted, the intercourse between the two courts had almost been broken off by a violent quarrel between the Chevalier de Gremonville, the ambassador of Louis XIV., and Prince Leopold Lobkowitz, Duke of Sagan, the Emperor's prime minister. Their reconciliation, brought about by a public apology from Prince Lobkowitz to Gremonville, enabled the French ambassador to overcome the difficulties placed in the way of any project of alliance by the excessive demands of the court of Vienna. In consideration of the satisfaction given to the Emperor on the subject of the guarantee of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle promised by Leopold to Spain, Gremonville obtained the signature of a secret treaty of neutrality. The Emperor undertook to give no assistance to the States-General, provided that, if the King of France attacked them, he should abstain from carrying the war into the imperial dominions.

The gradually narrowing circle in which Louis was seeking to inclose the United Provinces was completing their investment. Whilst he won from them the Swedish alliance, and hindered the Emperor from coming to their assistance, he was securing to himself the co-operation of most of the German princes by taking them into his pay. The valuable collection of their original receipts, carefully preserved to this day, furnishes a list of his pensioners. He held at his disposal the whole Electoral College of the empire. Besides his negotiations and conventions with the Archbishop of Mayence, the Archbishop of Cologne, and the Duke of Brandenburg, he had attached to his interests all the other Electors: Charles Philip van Legen, Bishop of Trèves, John George II. Elector of

Saxony, Frederick Maria, Elector of Bavaria, to whom he had secretly promised that his daughter should marry the Dauphin, and the Elector Palatine, Charles Louis, whose daughter had lately become the second wife of the Duke of Orleans. Eberhard III., Duke of Würtemberg, Philip William, Duke of Neuburg, for whom Louis had obtained the restitution of the citadel of Juliers and whose pretensions to the throne of Poland he had supported, and the Bishops of Spires and Strasburg had all been won over either by promises or money by the King of France.

His promises and his bounty found a less ready reception with the Princes of the House of Brunswick-Luneburg. The eldest, George William, Duke of Zell, and his youngest brother Augustus, Bishop of Osnaburg—whose wife Sophia was the patroness and correspondent of Leibnitz, and whose son became King of England under the name of George I.—had long since declared themselves in favour of the United Provinces. They had come to the assistance of the republic not only during the second English war, but also during the invasion of the Spanish Netherlands by Louis XIV. But the States-General had been unable to secure continuance of their help by conceding demands which seemed to them too exorbitant. Ever since the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle they had withheld from the Princes of Luneburg the excessive subsidies demanded by them for keeping under arms a contingent of troops ready for the field. The States attempted to bring them to more moderate terms by the intervention of an agent who had been long in their confidence, Captain Brasset, son-in-law of Hoofdt, the burgomaster of Amsterdam. To procure the success of their negotiations, they were eager in their support of one of the Brunswick Princes, Rudolf Augustus, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbuttel, in his complaints against the Bishop of Münster, with whom he had been engaged in some frontier disputes. The folly of the deputies sent to represent them in the conferences for the settlement of this difference, deprived them of the advantage of a mediation which they had offered but had failed to profit by on account of idle quarrels about precedence.

Far from gaining the Duke of Wolfenbuttel to their cause, they went near to alienating him entirely by taking the part of the town of Brunswick, which had appealed to them when its privileges were threatened by the Duke. Without venturing to come to the assistance of the town, they sent orders to recall such of their officers as had accompanied the Duke to the siege, at which the Prince of Orange was making his first essay in arms. All these incidents were skilfully made use of for the advantage of France by one of the most able of the French diplomatists, Gourville, whom Louis XIV. had employed to use his influence with the Princes of Luneburg. The Duke of Zell, however, desiring to justify his reputation for fidelity to his promises, refused to enter into any engagements with the King of France against the republic, and the Duke of Wolfenbuttel maintained the same reserve. But John Frederick, Duke of Hanover, who had become a convert to the Catholic faith and had married a daughter of Anne of Gonzaga, Princess Palatine, did not hesitate to conclude a treaty with Louis, which under an appearance of neutrality assured his co-operation to the King of France. In consideration of a subsidy of 10,000 crowns per month, he allowed the French troops to pass through his territory. Three months later the Bishop of Osnaburg, of whom the United Provinces had thought themselves secure, was detached from their cause and gained over to France by Louis XIV.'s envoy, M. de Verjus.

The States-General could expect nothing but open and even more dangerous hostility from their two other neighbours, the Bishop of Münster and the Archbishop of Cologne, whom the King of France was about to adopt not only as allies, but also as auxiliaries. The Bishop of Münster had never been sincerely reconciled to the United Provinces, and had not lost sight of the plans of conquest in which he had failed during their last war with England. Checked by the intervention of Louis XIV., he reckoned upon profiting by the resentment of the King of France against the States-General to allow free course to his restless ambition. 'He has obtained from the States of his dominions a considerable sum,' writes a

correspondent to De Witt, 'under pretence of founding a university at Münster, and he will employ it to raise troops rather than to pay professors and learned men, for whom he has no such liking as for the first.'

Always ready to intervene in any dispute that might favour the aggrandisement of his bishopric, the Bishop skilfully took advantage of the quarrel that had arisen between his neighbours the Count and Countess of Bentheim to declare himself against the Count, and to garrison his castle. The States-General, who had taken the part of the Countess of Bentheim, feared that the Bishop might be in this way seeking occasion for a rupture, and thought it necessary to put the Dutch frontier into a state of defence. False reports having reached them that they were threatened by the episcopal forces, they hastily despatched to the front several companies from the garrisons in Holland. The alarm having proved unfounded, the States of Holland, desirous of keeping on good terms with the Bishop, imprudently resumed their former confidence. The Grand Pensionary even blamed the despatch of troops, which had been ordered by the Council of State in his absence, and asked for their recall. In vain did Prince John Maurice of Nassau, from his residence at Cleves, whence he could keep an eye on the Bishopric of Münster, give warning of the Bishop's military preparations. He could not succeed in getting any steps taken to compel him to disarm before the Kings of France and England were ready to come to his assistance.

The States merely sent one of their deputies, Amerongen, a member of the nobility of the Province of Utrecht, to visit the Bishop and ascertain his disposition towards them. On his arrival at Münster, Amerongen found the Bishop completely in the hands of the French envoy, De Verjus, and he sent word home that the country was swarming with troops ready for active service. In the hope of throwing the States-General off the scent, the Bishop sent to the Hague the president of his council of war, Bentinck, charging him with protestations of pacific intentions which deceived the States, and by

the advice of the Grand Pensionary the offer of negotiations was not refused.

But the Bishop had only engaged in them in order to gain time. Unknown to the States-General, his plenipotentiaries signed two treaties with the envoy of Louis XIV.: one, which was intended to be made public, promised neutrality on his part; the other, which was to be kept secret, guaranteed his active co-operation, and pledged him to put into the field a body of troops whose number was fixed at 9,000 men, in consideration of enormous subsidies and the assignment of some strong places. The Bishop of Münster continued, however, to ask for still more advantageous arrangements, and Louvois writes in the following year: 'If the King followed his first impulse, he would reply that he has done too much already and does not choose to do anything more.' Louis, however, never thinking any precaution superfluous, consented to the payment of 2,000 crowns per month to the Bishop of Paderborn, coadjutor to the Bishop of Münster, and thus prevented him from rousing any opposition to the latter in the Chapter, and deprived John de Witt of all advantage from the secret intelligences which he had contrived to maintain. Unable any longer to hide from themselves the danger that threatened them, the States-General reinforced their frontier garrisons, while their formidable neighbour, feeling concealment to be no longer necessary, boasted of 'being soon able, like a new Hercules, club in hand, to crush the republic with his blows.'

While securing the co-operation of the Bishop of Münster, Louis made use of the Bishopric of Cologne as an advanced post which would enable him easily to invade the United Provinces. Forced to respect the neutrality of the Netherlands, in order not to endanger his alliance with England, this was the only road open to him, and if De Witt could have obtained a hearing for his far-sighted counsels, the King of France would have found this closed. Maximilian Henry of Bavaria, Elector and Archbishop of Cologne and Bishop of Liége, was the more likely to accept the offers of Louis that his advisers were the Bishop of Strasburg, Francis Egon of Fürstemberg, and his brother William of Fürstem-

berg, whose valuable services had already been secured by the King of France. The Elector of Cologne entertained, moreover, the most hostile feelings towards the States-General, and fresh frontier disputes had recently reawakened his old enmity. He had not forgiven their occupation of the town of Rhynberg, which the Dutch had taken from the Spaniards in the War of Independence, and of which he claimed the restoration, although it had ceased to form a part of his diocese so far back as the fifteenth century. Suddenly called upon to give it up, the States-General, by the prudent advice of De Witt, consented to treat with the Elector's minister, Bouchorst, and a few months later, in March 1670, offered him complete satisfaction on condition of the conclusion of a defensive alliance. But the Elector sent them word by the Bishop of Strasburg 'that the time was past for speaking of it,' and thus left them no doubt as to the engagements he was negotiating with France.

The danger of this co-operation, so threatening to the safety of the republic, might have been averted by the States if they could have secured to Cologne its independence, which that town was now defending against the Elector by an appeal to its privileges as an imperial city. In order to prevent his getting possession of it and handing it over to the King of France, the Grand Pensionary hastened to take advantage of the quarrel, and obtained authority from the States of Holland to introduce secretly into the town some engineers and officers, amongst them Colonel Bampfield, in whom he trusted completely, and the Quartermaster-General Pain et Vin. A regiment of 1,500 men, of which the command was given to Bampfield, was raised at the cost of the States in order to repel any attack in the event of the Elector assuming the offensive.

Meanwhile the States had recourse to negotiations to disarm him. While still represented at his court by Amerongen, they sent to Boulogne two commissioners, Van Sypesteyn, a relative of the Grand Pensionary, and Van der Tocht, a deputy of their Assembly, and they addressed to the Emperor a most urgent appeal in favour of Cologne, which, as an

Imperial city, had a right to his protection. The Elector, not wishing to precipitate a rupture before his treaties with France were signed, accepted the mediation of the Marquis de Grana, the commissioner from the court of Vienna, but still continued his preparations for attack by concentrating round Cologne his forces, whose numbers were swelled by the French deserters whom Louis allowed to go over to his service. To convince the States of the danger that threatened them, Bampfield repaired to the Hague and informed them that the resources at the disposal of the magistrates for the defence of the town were inadequate. Fresh reinforcements were urgently called for, and the demand, strongly supported by De Witt, was submitted to the States-General. The deputies of Holland, joined by those of five other provinces, expressed the greatest eagerness to assist Cologne. They declared themselves ready to despatch thither at once thirteen companies of foot and three troops of horse. Had this intervention been decided upon in time it would have dealt an irreparable blow to the designs of Louis, and even now the salvation of the republic might depend upon it.

Unhappily, internal dissensions prevented the succour of Cologne. Zealand, in order to be revenged for the opposition of Holland to the reviving pretensions of the Orange party, refused to consent to the despatch of troops until Holland should have laid upon foreign grain a duty by which Zealand hoped largely to profit, as it would secure a better price for her own harvests. Holland could not submit to these fiscal demands. By raising the price of bread to her own people, she would have altered to their prejudice the conditions of cheap subsistence which enabled them to endure the burden of taxation. In vain did the Grand Pensionary urge the most convincing arguments to prove the iniquity and danger of a contest so fatal to the interests of the republic—Zealand remained inflexible, and persevered in obstinate opposition.

The defenders of the town, believing themselves to be abandoned, resigned themselves to submission, and Cornelius de Witt, arriving at Cologne on board a Dutch vessel, could but testify to their discouragement. The Elector sought

to profit by this state of things to induce the magistrates to consent as a preliminary to the departure of Colonel Bampfield's regiment from the town, and the entrance in its stead of troops from the circle of Lower Saxony. The burgomaster at first evaded these proposals. Feeling convinced, however, that they would not long be rejected, De Witt made a last effort to encourage the magistrates and townspeople. Assailed on all sides by the murmurs of the other provinces Zealand was forced to yield, and the Grand Pensionary at last succeeded in obtaining in the States-General an accordance too long delayed. He took advantage of it to draw up with the ministers of Spain and of the Empire a scheme by which the States were to send two more regiments to Cologne, to which the Emperor was to add 1,500 foot, and the King of Spain three regiments of horse. This convention, which might otherwise have been effectual, was too late to change the course of events. The party within Cologne which had been gained over to the interests of the Elector and of the King of France, had not remained inactive, and the election of a new burgomaster, Van den Heuvel, who was in its interest, secured the success of its manœuvres. From the moment that Van den Heuvel entered upon his office he openly supported the proposals of the Elector, insisting upon the departure of the Dutch regiments, and appealing to the guarantee of the King of France as sufficient to secure the privileges of the town. His advice was finally listened to by the townspeople, who feared to be reduced to the last extremity before the promised reinforcements should arrive. The terms of an agreement were hastily settled, and the King of France, by getting rid of the Dutch troops, secured to himself free entrance from the Rhine into the territories of the United Provinces. 'By not sending troops into Cologne,' writes Chantilly to Condé, 'the States have for the last three months been letting slip the chance that might have saved them.'

This difficulty having been smoothed away, Louis lost no time in taking the diplomatic steps which completed his preparations for war. Six months before, he had concluded a preliminary treaty by which he secured not merely the passage

of provisions through the diocese of Liège, but also the necessary magazines for stores and ammunition for the French troops, in consideration of a subsidy of 10,000 crowns monthly. He had also promised to restore Rhynberg to the Elector and to give up Maestricht to him as soon as these places had been conquered from the United Provinces. By a second treaty, in January 1672, which was an offensive league, the Elector undertook to put into the field an auxiliary force of seventeen or eighteen thousand men, and to maintain them with a further subsidy of 28,000 crowns per month. Four thousand French soldiers, who took oath to him and wore the electoral scarf, were placed under his orders for the first four months of the campaign, and 20,000 men were to be sent to his assistance if he were attacked. In consideration of this promise of assistance, and on payment of 400,000 livres to the Elector, the King of France obtained by a final treaty, two or three weeks after the second, the skilfully concealed cession of the town of Nuys, which, from its situation at the confluence of the river Erft and the Rhine, made him master of an important strategic position. Under the pretence of an exchange with the French soldiers, who according to a preconcerted plan had deserted and taken service with the electoral troops, and to whom the King of France granted permission to re-enter his army, 1,400 Swiss, under the orders of a countryman of their own, Colonel Stoppa, took possession of the fortress which was to serve as a base of operations to the French army.

To insure the success of these negotiations, Louis XIV. had confided in no one but Louvois. The latter had repaired to Cologne to pave the way for the submission of the town by conferences with the municipality, in which he openly announced the coalition of France and England against the republic, in order to preclude all expectation of assistance from the States-General. He had besides when at Bruhl placed himself in direct communication with the Elector and his first minister, the Bishop of Strasburg, in order to secure the prompt execution of those clauses of the treaty which he desired to keep secret, but which Bampfield communicated to the Grand Pensionary. The preliminaries for the invasion of

the United Provinces, of which De Groot also gave information to De Witt, were thus arranged, and the French army might in all security set out on the first stages of its march.

Surrounded by enemies and abandoned by those who should have been their defenders, the States-General had not lost heart. De Witt had never ceased to warn the courts of Europe of the danger which threatened them. 'France,' he declared to Wicquefort, the agent of the Dukes of Brunswick-Luneburg, 'cannot increase her power without becoming dangerous to all the rest of Europe, and after the conquest of the United Provinces there will be nothing to prevent her universal domination.' Whilst the Grand Pensionary was vainly renewing negotiations with Switzerland and Denmark relative to the levying of troops and to military assistance, he obtained from Berlin and Madrid promises of effectual support.

The Elector of Brandenburg and the Queen-Regent of Spain were making ready to come forward in aid of the republic in order to protect her against invasion by the King of France, and it was to these two alliances that she owed her deliverance. In successfully concluding them the States-General found a most useful assistant in Baron Lisola, the Imperial envoy at the Hague, who remained persistently faithful to their cause. He had been one of the first to take alarm at the fate which menaced the United Provinces, and, as the danger came nearer, he requested fresh conferences with the Grand Pensionary. 'I have a multitude of things of the highest importance to say to you,' he writes to him; 'I know how occupied you are and do not venture to interrupt you, but I know also that, however important your business may be, a quarter of an hour will be as usefully spent between you and me as in any other matter.' The independence of the United Provinces appeared to him the best guarantee against the subjection of the other States, and he was anxious to secure protection for them that Europe might be guarded against the danger of a universal monarchy.

No one could give them more effectual assistance than the Elector of Brandenburg. Frederick William had acquired

an uncontested supremacy among the German princes, since, at the close of his successful war against John Casimir, King of Poland, he had added to the dominions he possessed in the empire the sovereignty of ducal Prussia, which he had formerly held as a fief from Poland. His possessions now extended from the duchy of Cleves on the hither side of the Rhine to the farther bank of the Vistula. Ambitious and persevering, Frederick William had no wish to remain dependent upon either the Empire of Germany or France, and was preparing, if need be sword in hand, to play the part of arbitrator. His court at Berlin was a place of meeting for all the negotiators of Europe, while at the same time he was giving his most assiduous attention to the recruiting, provisioning, and officering of his troops, and was converting his principality into a military power, thus preparing for his descendants the destiny which was to insure the greatness of Prussia.

Hitherto the United Provinces had not had much cause to count upon his assistance. The good understanding between the two governments had long been troubled by mutual jealousy and suspicion. Frederick William was constantly complaining of the garrisons which had been placed in several fortified towns in his duchy of Cleves, such as Emerich, Orsoy, and Wesel. The States had taken these places from the Spaniards and refused to give them up, because by them they were masters of the Rhine and the safety of their territory was thus secured. Frederick William considered himself the enemy of the party now governing the United Provinces. When, according to the treaty of Cleves, he was preparing to assist them against the Bishop of Münster during the second English war, his ministers declared that, while aiding the Dutch against their enemies abroad, his appearance in the field would be a signal for a revolution at home in favour of his nephew, the Prince of Orange. 'As soon as the Elector sets his troops in motion,' they wrote, 'the Grand Pensionary will have little voice in the matter, because measures will be taken to deprive him of the authority and power that he has arrogated to himself.'

This avowed hostility prevented De Witt from favouring

a treaty which the Elector besides made conditional on the payment of fresh subsidies, and particularly on the restitution of the Rhine fortresses. An alliance concluded upon such terms seemed to him more burdensome than profitable to the republic. Accordingly, when Amerongen was charged to represent the United Provinces at Berlin, his departure was further postponed until the end of the year 1671, although his presence at the Elector's court seemed necessary in order to make up for lost time. 'For this reason,' writes the French agent Bernard, who still remained at the Hague, 'orders have been at last sent to him to use all speed.'

The suspicions which had kept Frederick William at arm's length were soon proved unfounded by his generous intervention in favour of the republic. As soon as Louis XIV. informed him of his designs against the United Provinces, the first intimation of which was conveyed to him by one of the most skilful of the French diplomatic agents, Verjus, Comte de Crécy, he manifested his apprehensions. In vain the King of France believed that he had bound him to his cause by obtaining from him a promise not to place any obstacle in the way of his invasion of the Netherlands. The Elector still endeavoured to bring about a mediation, and instructed his resident at the French court, Von Crockow, to find out from Louis what satisfaction he would accept from the States-General, pledging himself to obtain it. Lionne cut short all negotiation, declaring that the King could accept nothing from those whose power he intended to destroy, and he added that the conventions concluded between the King and his allies would allow of no further agreement.

The Elector, thus rebuffed, did not hesitate as to the line of policy he should pursue, notwithstanding the threatening representations made by the new minister sent by the King of France to Berlin—Bernard de la Guiche, Comte de Saint Géran. Frederick William paid no heed to them and remained inflexible in his resolve, although his chief advisers, especially his Prime Minister Baron Schwerin and the newly-married Electress, Dorothea of Holstein, spared no pains to turn him from it. Encouraged by Count Dohna, nephew of

the Princess-Dowager of Orange, and by Baron Pelnitz, his chief equerry and colonel of the guards—'as intelligent a man as I have ever known,' writes De Guiche, 'and wonderfully understanding in business'—Frederick William continued unfaltering in his purpose. Public opinion, too, was in favour of a closer connection with the United Provinces. 'His generals, Otto Spaar and Eller,' writes Amerongen, 'were not content merely to drink to the health of the States and the success of their arms, but expressed also a desire to offer to the republic their services and those of their soldiers.' Not only did the Elector refuse to conclude a treaty of co-operation or even of neutrality with Louis XIV., but he sent him word, after first informing the envoy of the republic of his intentions, 'that he might be obliged to give to the United Provinces, if they were attacked, the assistance which he had formerly promised them by the treaty of Cleves through the mediation of the King of France, who could not, therefore, have any ground of complaint.'

The indecision of the States had hitherto prolonged the negotiations. They had confined themselves to making such advances to the Elector as consisted in accepting the sponsorship of one of his sons, to whom they gave handsome presents and a pension of 2,000 florins, and in showing willingness even to restore Orsoy to him. They refused, however, to give up to him the other fortresses which they held in the duchy of Cleves, and haggled over the subsidies to be granted to him, so as to cause the taunt to be addressed to them of 'acting as if it were a question of buying a dish of fish.' Amerongen extricated himself from these difficulties with singular skill, and Romswinkel, the Elector's envoy at the Hague, assisted him in smoothing them away by mutual concessions. The Elector was satisfied with a stipulation that his alliance with the republic should remain secret, concealed under the appearance of a promise of neutrality. By the terms of the treaty concluded at Cologne, the 2nd of May, 1672, he promised to furnish to the States-General 20,000 men and a force of artillery, of which he was himself to take the command, and to encamp them in Westphalia.

The States-General undertook on their side to pay half the expenses of the levy and pay of this corps d'armée, at a rate of 79,543 rix-dollars per month, and a first sum of 22,000 dollars was paid to the Elector at Hamburg on May 17.

Having thus pledged himself to assist the United Provinces, Frederick William completed his good offices by endeavouring to bring other princes into the alliance. His envoys in all the courts of Europe were instructed to watch and foil the manœuvres of the French diplomatists. The Dutch resident at Vienna, Hamel Bruyninex, writes: 'All eyes are fixed upon the Elector. His conduct is considered decisive, as much on his own account and the power he possesses, as from his position in the Empire. It is thought that he above all people should guard the safety of Germany.' Amerongen, with good reason, congratulated himself on the assistance which he succeeded in procuring for the republic when abandoned or betrayed by her allies, and at the same time lamented that so useful an auxiliary had not sooner been summoned to her aid. '*Sero sapiunt Phryges*,' wisdom comes late to the Trojans, he writes to his friends, and he adds with pious gratitude, 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

The negotiations of the States-General with the Elector of Brandenburg had encouraged the good-will towards them of the Archbishop of Mayence, and gradually drew him away from Louis XIV., who had not been well served at his court by the French resident, the Abbé Gravel. John Philip of Schoenborn, Archbishop of Mayence, in his capacity as Chief Elector, had the management of federal affairs, and was Arch-chancellor of the Empire. He had long been in constant communication with the other German princes, in order to conclude with them a defensive league, to which he had already gained the Electors of Trèves and Saxony, thus endeavouring to dispel the danger of French domination which was threatening Germany. With this object he gave his patronage to the political schemes initiated by the great philosopher of the seventeenth century, Leibnitz, whose lofty vein of speculative thought had not made him indifferent to the events of his time.

In the hope of averting the disaster of European war, rendered imminent through the ambition of Louis XIV., by offering an equivalent that might tempt him, Leibnitz proposed to him the conquest of Egypt, which would secure his supremacy in the Mediterranean. The most persuasive arguments had been skilfully brought together in the memoir which he submitted to the King. To stimulate his hostility to the United Provinces it was represented to him that the conquest of Egypt, which was called the Holland of the East, would weaken the power of the republic by depriving her of her commerce, her navigation, and her colonial supremacy. Leibnitz pointed out in eloquent language the grandeur of an enterprise which had tempted all conquerors, which Philip Augustus had planned, and Saint Louis had vainly attempted to execute. 'It would,' he wrote, 'win for the King of France not merely immortal glory and a conscience at ease, but also a certain victory of which he could take advantage to obtain recognition of his pre-eminence in Europe and to become the arbiter of all nations.'

The chief adviser of the Elector of Brandenburg, Baron Christian von Boineburg, one of the most eminent of German statesmen, undertook to prepare the way for an enterprise which seemed calculated to attract a great monarch. It was less chimerical than might be supposed, for we may remember that, 126 years later, the scheme was taken up by Bonaparte, who flattered himself that he should find in Egypt the key to the empire of the world. But absorbed in his preparations for the invasion of the United Provinces, Louis showed no disposition to entertain the proposal, and the Elector of Mayence was obliged sorrowfully to renounce the hope of persuading him to accept it. Thenceforth he turned his attention solely to inducing Germany to take the side of the republic, and prepared to assist her by diplomacy while the Elector of Brandenburg defended her by arms.

These two alliances, however tardy and inadequate, were very useful to the United Provinces. The Elector of Mayence, who enjoyed great influence at the court of Vienna, might be

able to detach the Emperor Leopold from the French alliance; and, in addition, the apparent disposition of the Elector of Brandenburg threatened Louis with a dangerous diversion which might cut off the communications of his army with France. Although he had failed in obtaining a military guarantee for the security of the United Provinces by the occupation he had vainly urged of the town of Cologne, the Grand Pensionary had at least turned to account all the resources of diplomacy in the defence of their cause.

He completed this work of prevision by securing to the States-General the alliance of Spain, thus closing the road of the Netherlands to Louis, and rendering the United Provinces inaccessible to a French invasion along the greatest portion of their frontier. By a singular contrast the enmity between the two countries, which seemed to have been made irreconcilable by an eighty years' war, was transformed into an undertaking of mutual aid, and this alliance was to be turned against France, who, after liberating the United Provinces from the Spanish yoke, in her turn threatened them with a French conquest.

The States-General had already entered into close relations with the court of Madrid to preserve the possession of the Netherlands to Spain. But the Spanish Government had taken small account of the intervention of the States-General in their behalf, and had not forgiven them for forcing Spain, by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, to give up to the King of France a portion of what he had conquered. Their persistent demands relative to the subsidies which they desired to obtain from Spain for the benefit of Sweden, as the price of her participation in the Triple Alliance, had added to the irritation of the counsellors of the Queen-Regent, and the court of France had flattered itself that it might obtain acceptance at Madrid of proposals for an exchange in the Low Countries. The Dutch envoys at Brussels, Vrybergen and Van der Tocht, had accordingly prolonged their residence there in vain, and had not succeeded in procuring the adoption of measures of defence for the protection of the Spanish provinces against a fresh attack.

Not discouraged, the States-General, inspired by the active zeal of the Grand Pensionary, looked round for assistance to enable them to resume negotiations under more favourable conditions. Two statesmen, Count Monterey at Brussels and Beverningh at Madrid, contributed especially towards the desired result, and succeeded in rousing the Spanish Government from its lethargy.

Don Inigo Velasco, Count of Monterey and a grandee of Spain, who had been appointed Governor of the Netherlands in the room of the incapable and indolent Constable of Castille, was the second son of the former minister of Philip IV., Don Louis de Haro, who had negotiated the marriage of Louis XIV. with the Infanta of Spain. Although barely one-and-twenty, he had distinguished himself from his first entrance into office by his great abilities, which were enhanced by the charm of his manner, and he flattered himself that by his indomitable energy he might preserve to Spain that portion of her dominions which had not yet been conquered by France. Convinced that the fate of the Netherlands was involved in the independence of the United Provinces, he pointed out to the States-General the dangers of the King of France's aggression, urged them to provide for the security of the republic, and encouraged them to take measures for defence, himself setting the example of military preparations.

The States hastened to avail themselves at the court of Madrid of the good dispositions of the new governor. Their resident at Madrid, Baron Reede van Renswoude, who had owed his office to the solicitations of his father, deputy of the province of Utrecht, was just dead, without having been of any use to them as a diplomatist. 'His letters were not worth the carriage,' writes a contemporary. The States of Holland were anxious to replace him by a minister who should be worthy of their confidence, and proposed to the States-General the appointment of Beverningh. 'The post of ambassador to Spain being vacant,' writes De Witt to him in February 1670, 'the States must choose the most eminent person to fill it. Their Noble Mightinesses have therefore instructed me to request you to

be so good as to return to the service of your country by accepting an embassy extraordinary to that court, thus aiding by your vigilant care to maintain the peace which you signed at Aix-la-Chapelle, and to facilitate both the alliances and the other measures necessary for its continuance.'

Beverningh was not at all desirous to leave home, and preferred to remain in the Assembly of the States of Holland as deputy of the town of Gouda. De Witt, convinced that the success of the Spanish negotiations depended upon his acceptance of the embassy, had recourse to the most urgent representations to overcome his hesitation. Beverningh continued to repel these advances. Four months later, Temple writes, 'The States of Holland would fain engage Monsieur Beverningh to accept of that employment, but I doubt their succeeding.' The States of Holland, however, encouraged by the Grand Pensionary, would not be rebuffed. They offered Beverningh every possible assurance that might satisfy him. Not only did they grant him liberty to return, only asking him to take the embassy for a limited time, with the title of ambassador extraordinary, but they even forbore to associate a colleague with him: 'in consideration of his proved conduct, his vigilance, and his indefatigable labours.' They undertook besides to supplement his salary at the cost of the province, raising it to a hundred gold caroluses, or forty crowns a day. By these means they obtained his consent and hastened to propose his nomination to the States-General, who confirmed it without delay.

It was important that the negotiations should be commenced at Brussels so as to insure to the republic the support and assistance of Count Monterey. The States-General, accordingly, before despatching Beverningh to Spain, sent him to visit the Governor of the Netherlands. At the first interview he won the Spaniard's confidence. Count Monterey informed him of the military and financial resources at his disposal, not concealing their insufficiency, and begged him to support the constant appeals for money which he was making to the Spanish Government. He promised also, in order to insure the success of the embassy confided to him, to secure

for him the good-will of his uncle, Don Pascal of Aragon, Archbishop of Toledo, and of his father-in-law, Count Ayola, who were both among the Queen-Regent's advisers.

On his return to the Hague, Beverningh reported the result of his conferences with Count Monterey, and received instructions from the States-General as to the course of his diplomacy. These were drawn up in fifty articles regulating the various parts of the negotiations. Beverningh was desired to recommend to the court of Madrid the interests of Dutch commerce, and to obtain its co-operation in the war of tariffs declared by the United Provinces against France in reprisal of the duties and prohibitions imposed upon their goods and merchandise. The measures to be taken for the security of the Netherlands, on which the States-General felt that their own safety depended, were to be the principal object of his embassy. Beverningh was, therefore, to represent to the Spanish Government the necessity of securing, in case of attack, the assistance of Sweden, by the payment of the subsidies remaining due to her, and by the guarantee of those promised for putting into the field the forces that she was to furnish. He was instructed, besides, to persuade Spain to enter into pecuniary engagements with the Princes of Brunswick, and to oblige the Emperor to pledge himself, at least, to neutrality. Thus, while appearing to think only of securing the safety of the Netherlands in the interest of Spain, the States-General were calculating upon making use of the Spanish Government either to pay the defenders whom they themselves might need, or to guarantee the preservation of peace. With this object they impressed upon their agent that he should 'keep up communications with the other foreign ambassadors, particularly those of England and Sweden, and even with the nuncio, to whom he was to pay the same civilities as were observed by the other ministers.' The negotiations of Beverningh were destined to acquire decisive importance, and the scope of his instructions was to be still further extended, by the necessity of gaining the assistance of Spain for the United Provinces to preserve them from the dangers to which they were about to be exposed.

Quitting the Hague on December 6, 1670, the Dutch ambassador landed in Spain six weeks later, and was prevented by ill-health from making his public entry into Madrid on horseback. Hardly had he arrived before he found himself involved in the difficulties opposed by the indecision of the Spanish Government to the success of his diplomatic mission. These had been foreseen with remarkable clearness by Lionne, who writes to Pomponne: 'The negotiations of Beverningh will be rendered difficult by the lively apprehension that the Spanish ministers will feel that as soon as the King, their master, makes up his mind to assist the Dutch, his Majesty will turn against Flanders all that he has prepared for the United Provinces. Still they reflect that by leaving the latter to be destroyed they gain only the favour granted by the Cyclops of being devoured last, so that they are placed in a singular embarrassment, whichever resolution they take.'

Two parties, of which the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo and Count Peñaranda were the chiefs, were disputing for power. On the one hand, the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo had assumed the government in the name of the Queen-Regent, Maria Anne of Austria, and in the event of a vacancy on the throne he wished that the inheritance of the monarchy should pass to the German Emperor. On the other, Count Peñaranda, attached to Don Juan, the natural son of Philip IV., was determined to defend the throne of Spain against all foreign pretenders. Notwithstanding this divergence of opinion, both were in favour of the preservation of the Netherlands. But the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, from enmity and jealousy towards the new governor, Count Monterey, was not disposed to listen to his warlike proposals, and preferred to avert the danger by conciliatory measures which he advised should be used towards the King of France. Count Peñaranda, on the contrary, was disposed to repulse the offers made by Louis XIV. of a compromise that should effect a peaceful settlement of the disputes relating to the new frontiers of France and the Netherlands, and would have preferred the renewal of a war which would force the United Provinces to take part openly for Spain.

The States-General were in equal dread of both these dangers, and took all means to evade them. They could not conceal from themselves that peace would be again endangered if the court of Madrid rejected the proposal of Louis to submit the disputes arising from the different interpretations of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle to the arbitration of England and Sweden. The Spanish Government declared that it could not accept this mediation, since the King of France desired to exclude the States-General from it. In vain did the States represent that when the United Provinces had themselves drawn back, Spain could not insist upon their participation. 'So far as we are concerned,' writes De Witt to the Spanish ambassador at the Hague, Don Estevan de Gamarra, 'although we greatly esteem the honour done by the Queen-Regent to the States, we are yet of opinion that it is important to us, and still more so to her Majesty, that this consideration should be disregarded; and that attention should be paid only to finishing the business as soon as possible, and to settling without loss of time the disputes which have not yet been adjusted, so as to avert all danger of a fresh rupture. In the present condition of affairs it is better to look to essentials, than to trifle about a supposed point of honour while interest summons us elsewhere.'

The court of Madrid still, however, sought fresh devices to elude the arbitration, and the Grand Pensionary spared neither remonstrances nor even threats to put an end to delays as useless as they were dangerous. 'It is for her Majesty's ministers,' he writes, 'to decide whether, by continuing in obstinate opposition to their own interests, they intend to precipitate both her and themselves, at their own risk and peril, into inevitable misfortunes.' Beverningh warmly pressed these expostulations, but could not obtain attention to them. His memorials remained unanswered. 'We seldom meet,' he writes, 'and the interviews are confined to the reading of a few interrupted sentences of which it is impossible to discover the sense or the connection.' However, when the court of Madrid was convinced that nothing was to be expected from England, whose understanding with France

was becoming more and more evident, it recognised its powerlessness, and, making up its mind to submission, at length consented to the arbitration.

It was easier to compel Spain to adopt even a policy of concession than one of resistance, and it was necessary almost to use force to oblige her to defend the Netherlands against a new invasion. The court of Madrid was not disposed to pay the costs of another war, and proposed to leave them to the States-General, representing that the United Provinces were now in greater danger than the Netherlands of French conquest. In vain Beverningh reproached the advisers of the Queen Regent with forgetting that if the Spaniards allowed the territory of the United Provinces to be encroached upon they would find themselves henceforward between the hammer and the anvil. Hampered by his ignorance of the Spanish language, with which he was unfortunately not acquainted, as he writes to De Witt, and obliged almost always to ask leave to transact his business in writing, he was annoyed at the impossibility of putting an end to the tergiversations with which his demands for troops and money were met, and he writes to the Constable of Castille, 'that by persisting in maintaining silence the Spanish Government would compel him to take his leave.' His urgency, helped by the good offices of the imperial ministers, did, however, obtain the satisfaction he demanded. On the same day on which the Queen Regent informed him that she consented to the final settlement of her differences with the King of France by the acceptance of the arbitration, she also told him that the president of the council of finance had received orders to continue the payments demanded by Sweden, and she assured him 'that for the defence of the Netherlands the Spanish Government would go beyond the possible, as much in its own interest as for the satisfaction of the United Provinces.'

The States-General were so fearful of giving the slightest pretext for aggression, that, instead of asking for an alliance, they contented themselves with an engagement of mutual assistance, no one being disposed to go farther. That it

might be the more easily concluded, the Grand Pensionary proposed that Count Monterey should be commissioned, in his capacity as Governor of the Low Countries, to consult with the commissioners of the States-General, and he demanded that the negotiations should in future be carried on at Brussels. This proposal once accepted by the Spanish Government, Beverningh was entitled to consider himself relieved from a mission which he had successfully fulfilled, and on which he received through De Witt the most flattering congratulations. Impatient to return home, he had already obtained permission to quit Madrid as soon as the Spanish Government should have accorded him a favourable reply. A month after he had received it, he obtained his farewell audience, at which he recommended the interests of the States-General to the care of the Queen Regent, and, making over his powers to the Secretary Valkenier, embarked for Holland, having secured the success of the negotiations which had been confided to him.

Nothing now remained but to complete the work of his embassy. The conferences which had been transferred to Brussels and the Hague followed their regular course under the direction of the Grand Pensionary of Holland, who was able to smoothe away the only remaining difficulties with regard to the carrying out of the engagement of mutual assistance. No reservation had been made by the commissioners charged with the task of drawing up the articles and submitting them to the States, but when they read out their report the deputies of Utrecht refused to guarantee the integrity of the Spanish monarchy in the event of a war between France and Spain, and would only engage to secure to Spain her possessions in the Netherlands. They yielded at last, however, to the urgent representations of the States of Holland, as expressed by the Grand Pensionary, and the scheme of agreement was confirmed by the votes of the deputies of all the provinces.

The Spanish negotiators delayed it for two months longer. The new ambassador from the court of Madrid, Don Emanuel de Lyra, did not show the same conciliatory disposition as his

predecessor, Don Estevan de Gamarra, who had just died. After vain attempts at procrastination and paltry quarrels about diplomatic etiquette, he announced that Spain would only consent to offer the United Provinces, in the event of an invasion, an auxiliary body of troops, and would refuse to bind herself by any engagement which would prevent her making a separate peace with France.

In order not to delay the conclusion of the treaty the States-General yielded this last clause, but they vehemently demanded the fulfilment of the promise given by Spain to assist them with her entire army, even if only as an auxiliary, that is to say without breaking with France. The friendly disposition of one of the negotiators, the Marquis de Louvignies, Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish forces in the Netherlands, with whom De Witt was on the best terms, was of great assistance to them in arranging this compromise. On December 17, 1671, the Commissioners of the States-General and the Spanish ambassador exchanged in their masters' names the declaration of mutual assistance, which was to be ratified within a period of two months.

Louis XIV. had neglected neither cajoleries nor threats in order to obstruct these negotiations. He had allowed them to be entered upon in the hope that they would furnish him with a pretext for breaking the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and thus enable him to complete the conquest of the Netherlands. But as soon as he perceived that any attack upon the Spanish possessions would cause a revival of the Triple Alliance, sooner than brave a fresh coalition, he renounced all thoughts of aggression against Spain. His mind being now filled solely with ideas of a war with the republic, he left no stone unturned to deprive the United Provinces of the alliance which was of so much importance to them. In order to deter the Spanish Government from entering into it, he gave instructions to his ambassador at Madrid, M. de Bonsy, Archbishop of Toulouse, to make known that he had received offers from the States-General with reference to the Netherlands, and to announce that he would willingly engage to accept no proposal concerning a partition, at least till the

young King of Spain should have attained his majority. As Louvois wrote later to Condé, he knew quite well, 'that he could always find an excuse for drawing back.' The communication transmitted to the Queen Regent by the French ambassador was received with such marks of satisfaction, that M. de Bonsy flattered himself that he had persuaded the Spanish Government to renounce all idea of an agreement with the States-General. Having allowed himself to be thus deceived, he requested to be allowed to return to his diocese, and was shortly afterwards replaced by the Marquis de Villars.

Louis XIV., having been informed of the conferences held at Brussels, did not await the arrival of his new ambassador in Madrid to oppose the measures of Count Monterey, who wished to close the Netherlands as well as the United Provinces to French commerce. The King of France hoped, moreover, to prevent the Spanish Government from treating with the States-General by causing his representations to be supported by those of the King of England, who sent the Earl of Sunderland as ambassador extraordinary to Spain. He instructed the Marquis de Villars to join with the latter in demanding from the court of Madrid an offensive alliance against the United Provinces, authorising him, however, in case the alliance could not be obtained, to content himself with a promise of neutrality. He added to these diplomatic measures a letter addressed directly to the Queen Regent of Spain, assuring her of his friendly dispositions, 'for which he referred her to his ambassador.' His advances were, however, useless, a resolution having been come to unknown to him, which was now irrevocable; on the very day that the Marquis de Villars was making known his instructions to the widow of Philip IV. the engagement of mutual assistance between the States-General and Spain had been signed at the Hague.

The penetration of the French diplomatists had thus been baffled. Persuaded that the conquest by France of the Netherlands would speedily follow that of the United Provinces, the Queen Regent preferred to expose herself to the possible risk of losing them, by boldly taking the part of the republic, rather than to make their loss at a later period

inevitable, by a policy of abstention. 'I find amongst the ministers great favour towards the States, and hatred towards France,' writes the Dutch commissioner, Mels, from Madrid; 'a member of the council of war boasted to me that he stood up before the council and declared that he would hold as traitors to the King all who were not prepared to assist our provinces, and to enter into a close alliance with them.'

Wishing, however, to exhaust all measures of conciliation before ratifying the treaty which had just been concluded, the Spanish Government made one last attempt at pacification, by offering its mediation to the French and English ambassadors. They responded only by threats of a speedy declaration of war, 'by means of which they hoped to complete the alarm of the Spanish Government.' These hopes were disappointed. The Queen Regent, driven to extremities, declared proudly that she would not persist in making any fresh proposals, but would do all that the treaties permitted her under the circumstances. The ratification of the engagement of mutual assistance which had been signed at Brussels after having been fruitlessly delayed by the French ambassador, was sent to Count Monterey and transmitted by him to the States, who received it with equal joy and gratitude. 'There is much uneasiness felt in Paris at the declaration of Spain,' writes De Groot, 'and the successful issue of the war is looked upon as less certain.'

In order to strengthen the alliance between the two governments, Count Monterey hastened to make known to the States-General that his latest instructions permitted him to complete the treaty and to consent to the prohibition of any separate peace in the event of a rupture with France. This new engagement, which was exchanged at the Hague, February 22, 1672, by the Grand Pensionary of Holland and the Spanish ambassador, in person, drew still closer the alliance between the two governments. 'This is a work of your hand,' writes De Witt to the Marquis de Louvignies, 'which is so much to your honour, and at the same time so conducive to a general peace, that we must all give you credit for it.'

Nothing remained to be done but to fix the contingent of troops destined for mutual defence. This convention was

negotiated between Count Monterey and the commissioners who had been sent to Brussels a month before by the States-General: Cornelius de Witt, Vrybergen—deputy of Zealand in the Council of State—and the Rhingrave. Count Monterey promised that he would shortly be in a position to put into the field a body of infantry of about ten thousand men, but could only engage for the moment to send three thousand horse. At his urgent request the commissioners determined to place at his disposal, in the neighbourhood of Bergen-op-Zoom, an auxiliary force of five regiments, under the command of Frederick of Nassau, Lord of Zuylestein, to whom they gave orders to enter the Netherlands at the first signal given by the Spanish Government. 'The despatch of these reinforcements to the forts near our frontiers,' writes De Witt to his brother, 'should give grounds for the hope that the dispositions of the Queen Regent will be rendered still more favourable.

To encourage her in her friendly feelings, the States-General determined to send a new ambassador to represent them at Madrid. Beveren, councillor of Dordrecht, to whom the appointment was offered, not having accepted it, they made choice of Adrian Paats, councillor of Rotterdam, a devoted friend of the Grand Pensionary and a learned lawyer and skilful diplomatist, who was to complete later on the negotiations so happily commenced by Beverningh. The States wished to obtain through him the promise that Spain would break with France in the event of an invasion of the United Provinces, offering in return to make an engagement to the same effect if the Netherlands should be attacked. They hoped in this manner to turn aside the attacks which might be made upon them, being persuaded that when once Louis XIV. was no longer under any necessity of keeping on terms with Spain, he would not be able to resist the temptation of carrying the war into Flanders and Brabant. 'In that case,' writes De Witt to his brother, 'unless there should be a flagrant violation of the Triple Alliance, England and Sweden will not be able to refrain from assisting Spain, and in assisting her, from assisting us also.' The Spanish court refused for the present to give them this satisfaction,

not choosing to bring about the inevitable and immediate invasion of the Netherlands, while the hope still remained of protecting the Spanish possessions by merely opposing the conquest of the United Provinces.

But although Spain would not consent to a declaration of war against France, her engagement to assist the States-General was sufficient to put an end to the dangers of their diplomatic isolation. 'I am persuaded,' writes De Groot from Paris, 'that the Spanish court will draw many princes into this league who had hitherto only looked upon our State as divided in itself, and destitute of any ally.' Moreover the intervention of Spain opposed a barrier to French invasion which closed the entrance into their territory along a line extending sixty leagues. So long as they were unapproachable on the side of the Netherlands they might still escape from the conquest with which they were threatened, and they possessed now in the Spanish alliance the surest guarantee of their safety.

It was not alliances, however, nor the more or less tardy assistance which the republic hoped for from abroad, that could suffice for her security. In order to maintain their independence, the United Provinces must defend themselves. Neither their wealth, which aroused the envy of all other nations, nor their commerce, to which Europe paid tribute, nor their fleets, which secured to them the supremacy over the ocean, could shelter them from invasion. They had not troops to repel it, and far from being alarmed at their destitute condition, the States of Holland, ever since the attempt made on their authority by the last stadtholder, had rather sought for their security in the weakening of their military forces, which they considered as dangerous to political freedom. The old army of the War of Independence, made illustrious by so many battles and sieges, and which for the last twenty-five years had had no enemy to fight against, had become speedily disorganised. The imprudent confidence which the States-General reposed in the treaty of the Triple Alliance had made them indifferent to the maintenance of their military forces.

The Grand Pensionary of Holland himself shared this delusive security, which was to cost him his life. He would have been unable, moreover, to arrest the course of public opinion, which demanded the disbandment of a portion of the troops, whose maintenance imposed too heavy a burden on the States-General. He expressed himself candidly to that effect in a letter addressed to De Groot when ambassador in Sweden. 'The attainment of peace,' he writes, 'has cost the republic millions, causing lamentations to be heard perpetually from her subjects about the payment of taxes. It is easy, therefore, to understand that the deliberations of the States must necessarily turn upon a reduction of the army, so that there may be fewer expenses to meet, and they may thus place themselves in such a position as may enable them later on to assist their allies, if a new war should supervene.' Persuaded that they had nothing to fear on their own account, the inhabitants of the United Provinces were impatient to enjoy the blessings of peace, and yielded to that pacific inclination which, in governments that promote free discussion, almost always follows upon the lassitude caused by prolonged efforts and great sacrifices.

Of the seven provinces, Holland had contributed in the largest measure by her taxes and loans towards the expenses of the last war with England, as well as towards the preparations made for the protection of the Netherlands. She had taken upon herself an augmentation of 15,000,000 florins in the public debt, without counting the money advanced to the other provinces, which amounted to more than 325,000 florins. It was, therefore, more important to her than to any other province to make provision for the prompt payment of interest as well as for the reduction of taxation. As soon, therefore, as the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle had been concluded, the States of Holland had proposed a considerable diminution of the army, which they wished to replace on a peace footing. In compliance with their request, the Council of State obtained a vote from the States-General for the discharge of 37,000 foot and 4,600 horse. This disbandment, which affected more than half the army, insured to the United Provinces a

saving of 1,607,086 florins per annum, of which by far the larger share was for the benefit of Holland.

These measures had not been carried out without giving rise to disputes between the States of Holland and the States-General, which threatened to break the bonds of the confederation. The difference arose with regard to the disbandment of the companies of French troops that had continued in the employment of the republic since the War of Independence. These companies were only to be disbanded according as vacancies occurred amongst their captains. The States of Holland, having bought out the officers commanding them, were not satisfied with the immediate dismissal of those companies which were still in their pay, pleading in justification the example already set by the other provinces, but claimed the right of themselves determining the number of companies they should disband, without being obliged to abide by the distribution fixed by the Council of State and adopted by the States-General. Instead of sixteen companies of the old troops which they had a right to discharge, they caused the reduction to be extended to twenty-seven, and even designated the eleven companies of recruits that should be comprised in this supplementary disbandment. They maintained, with good reason, that by charging them with the maintenance of a second regiment of marine infantry, in which the companies consisted of a hundred men, while those of the other regiments did not exceed sixty-five men, the States-General had increased their contingent by an excess of men whom they were at liberty to dismiss by way of compensation, by reducing proportionately the number of companies which they maintained. But in thus acting for themselves, they were guilty none the less of a usurpation of authority.

The States-General, on their side, instead of employing a conciliatory policy, threw themselves into the quarrel with ill-advised precipitation. In compliance with the demand of the Council of State, they decided that orders for disbanding troops could not be given by the states of the provinces, and authorised the Council of State to prohibit the governors of fortified towns, and colonels, from allowing the measures taken

by the States of Holland to be carried into execution. This resolution was carried by surprise in the presence of a single deputy of Holland, who inadvertently allowed it to pass. The states of the province immediately assembled and repaired in a body to the assembly of the States-General, where the Grand Pensionary acted as their spokesman. They represented that they were fulfilling their federal obligations so long as they maintained the contingent of troops with which they were chargeable, and they brought forward proofs that the force they had in their pay exceeded the contingent imposed upon them. They claimed, moreover, for the provinces the privilege of having the sole right of carrying into execution, with regard to the troops paid by each of them, the resolutions come to by the assembly of the States-General, and they demanded, therefore, that the manifesto revoking their orders should not be issued. The Council of State claimed the right to be heard, in order to dispute their pretensions; but the States-General, having admitted that the contingent of the States of Holland could not be augmented, did not choose to prolong a useless quarrel about privileges, and the satisfaction thus accorded them re-established harmony.

By persisting in the dispute, the States of Holland would have been without excuse but for their dread of the intervention of the States-General in the military affairs of the confederation. They could not forget the dangers which the latter had brought upon their provincial independence by supporting to their detriment the coup d'état attempted by the last stadtholder, and, determined for the future to be on their guard, took measures of precaution at the risk of exaggerating them. The dispute they had stirred up was of no importance so far as the military forces were concerned; it only affected eleven companies, and could have no other result than an increase or reduction of seven or eight hundred men in the army. Still it was not with impunity that the States of Holland were setting the example of opposition offered by a single province to resolutions agreed to in common for fixing the military contingent, and they were thus encouraging that resistance

which was subsequently opposed to themselves, when making vain attempts to place the republic in a state of defence.

The reduction of the army, which gave rise to no dispute amongst the provinces, was in conformity with the practice constantly observed up to that time. After the peace of Münster, only 29,000 men had been kept under arms, instead of 120,000. The steps which had just been taken reduced the force from 74,000—which number it had recently reached —to 32,640: 2,705 horse and 29,935 foot; for the maintenance of which an annual sum of 3,059,500 florins was set aside.

This army, of which the States were speedily to perceive the insufficiency, was divided into twenty-nine regiments of infantry and ten of cavalry, of which fourteen regiments of infantry and five of cavalry were kept up by Holland. The infantry regiments were subdivided into 404 companies of infantry and fifty companies of cavalry, half of which were in the pay of Holland. The infantry regiments, consisting of 1,000 or 1,100[1] men, comprised thirteen to fifteen companies. These companies, instead of being kept up to a complement of 100 men, to which they were restored later on, only consisted now of about sixty-five. The cavalry regiments consisted usually of only five companies, each numbering fifty horse at the outside. The infantry were armed with pikes and matchlocks; each company consisted of about thirty-six musketeers and twenty-five pikemen. Those of the cavalry who wore the cuirass were armed with swords, and the rest with arquebuses. The cuirassiers and arquebusiers usually formed distinct companies; when they were joined in one company, the arquebusiers were always the more numerous.

The officers of an infantry regiment consisted of: a colonel, who received 200 florins a month, to which was added his pay as captain of the colonel's company;[2] a lieutenant-colonel, who

[1] This number was doubled in the regiments of marine infantry.

[2] The companies placed under the direct command of the colonel, and which were therefore designated colonels' companies, contained a superior number of men.

received 80 florins; a sergeant-major with 60 florins, a quartermaster with 25 florins, a provost-marshal with 20 florins, and a chaplain with 50 florins. Each infantry company had: a captain in receipt of 100 florins a month, a lieutenant, a standard-bearer or ensign, a sergeant, a corporal, a drummer, and a surgeon. The men's pay was 16 florins a month for each pikeman, and 14 for each musketeer. Each company of horse was commanded by a captain, who had at his disposal three servants and four horses, and who received 250 florins a month; he had under him a lieutenant, a cornet, a quartermaster, a trumpeter and a farrier. Each officer received, besides his pay, 25 florins for the keep of his horses; the pay of the men was 28 florins.

Although military service was nominally imposed upon every man from the age of eighteen to sixty, this law had gradually fallen into disuse. The army was recruited, according to the custom of the day, by means of levies, carried out at the expense of the colonels and captains whom the States-General or the States of each province appointed in advance to the nominal command of their regiments or companies. They repaid themselves out of the price paid them by the States for each man,[1] and received in addition a premium,[2] as soon as the troops were available. Although the States of the provinces had reserved to themselves the right of nomination to all the commands of companies, the colonels appointed the captains, and at each fresh creation of companies the captains appointed the lieutenants, subject to certain conditions of military capacity. The commanders of regiments and companies did not fail to profit by the privileges which were thus allowed them, in spite of the prohibition to accept any sum of money from the officers whom they selected. As regarded the pay, it was made over to the captains of companies, and although it was settled at an unvarying amount, this handling of money, which the States of Holland would gladly have put a stop to, was the source of gain that was prejudicial to the

[1] The amount paid for the levy of troops varied. In 1662, twelve florins were paid for a foot-soldier and sixty for a horseman, besides travelling expenses.

[2] Forty florins for a company of infantry and seventy for a company of cavalry.

public interests. According to the evidence of De Guiche, who is perhaps not quite to be trusted, 'a Dutch cavalry company was worth a certain income of 5,000 florins.' The commands were considered as a sort of endowment, from which a revenue was to be drawn.

Thus abuses of all sorts were multiplied, without a possibility of their being repressed. De Guiche has given an account of them which betrays some exaggeration, but is none the less instructive. Being at Bergen-op-Zoom, he writes in his memoirs, he learned from the quartermaster of two companies of cavalry quartered there, that although they were changing garrison the quartermaster still retained a public-house which he kept in that town, in consideration of a sum of 200 or 300 florins which he paid the captain to be allowed to remain at home. De Guiche was assured that most of the cavalry soldiers were equally exempt from moving on payment of twelve or fifteen pistoles a month. 'I was much astonished,' he adds, 'to hear of a body of cavalry composed of men who never left their houses; and wishing to know whether this custom was followed elsewhere, I was informed that it was everywhere the same, only that the captain was bound to share with the other officers.'

The injudicious selection of the superior officers was the cause of this dangerous negligence. Suspected on account of their attachment to the Orange party, dissatisfied with a thankless service which gave them little chance of promotion, especially now that all vacancies were promised to the captains and lieutenants placed on half-pay in consequence of the reduction of the forces, the old officers had for the most part given in their resignation. They were generally replaced by youths hardly out of boyhood, the sons of citizens who owed their appointments to their connection with members of the States and who had had no apprenticeship in military matters. Some, sure of impunity, kept their companies below the proper complement, in order to increase their profits; others, without any regard to their duties, obtained substitutes, or left the command to their subalterns. The ties of discipline had thus become relaxed. Count de Guiche relates in his memoirs, that,

in the last war against the Bishop of Münster, an advanced guard of cavalry ordered out at eight o'clock in the evening, could only be got together at daybreak, and he adds that a colonel commissioned to defend the trenches and ordered by Prince John Maurice of Nassau to advance, kept him waiting more than two hours, because he had just received a letter from his wife and wished to answer it.

The distribution of military supplies was in no less disorganised a condition. The commissariat department was in arrears; Colonel Bampfield complains 'that the troops stationed on the banks of the Rhine at Rhynberg were without supplies, without cheese or butter, and could not buy food for love or money.' As for ammunition, the States-General had allowed themselves to be robbed of it. The Marquis de Louvois had in fact conceived and executed the audacious plan of purchasing it, and the thirst for gain had caused this speculation to be successfully carried out before it was discovered. Under the superintendence of the chief purveyor to the French army, Berthelot, and through the intervention of a Jew banker of Amsterdam, named Sadoc, considerable stores of powder, saltpetre, lead and matches were forwarded, under specious pretexts, into the electorate of Cologne, for the service of the King of France. As soon as the suspicions of the States-General began to be aroused with regard to this strange trade, they prohibited the export of military stores; but these had already in part disappeared, and on the urgent representations of John de Witt, the States were reduced to buying up all that they could obtain in the Netherlands.

The fortifications were in an equally unsatisfactory state, having been for the most part abandoned. The bastions had been transformed into gardens, the ditches had become fordable for want of proper care, houses had risen up round the ramparts, and measures for defence had been more than once sacrificed to the convenience of the magistrates of the towns. Moreover the fortresses were too numerous to be kept up or repaired, and it would have been impossible to dismantle the smaller ones without giving rise to suspicions of treason; in fact such a step would have been in opposition to the customary

laws of tactics in the seventeenth century, which multiplied fortresses for the purpose of weakening by a number of sieges the forces of the attacking army. All means of defence were thus wanting to the republic, and she no longer reckoned as a military power. 'We appear to understand war no longer;' such was the melancholy confession of one of the Grand Pensionary's correspondents.

No measure of reorganisation could be taken, moreover, till the States had filled up the superior commands. The post of commander-in-chief had been vacant for thirteen years, since the death of Major-General Brederode; and Prince William Frederick of Nassau, Master-General of Ordnance, who had died four years before, had had no successor. The States-General, after long debates, recognised the necessity of once more giving chiefs to the army. Six months before the first proposals for disbanding the troops, they had made choice of two major-generals: Prince John Maurice of Nassau, and the Swedish general, Wurtz. To these appointments were added those of two lieutenant-generals of cavalry, the Rhyngrave, and the Prince of Tarentum. The command of the artillery was conferred on one of the nobles of Holland, Van der Does de Noordwijck, Governor of Sluys, and that of the infantry on Frederick of Nassau, Lord of Zuylestein, president of the nobility of Utrecht, and paternal uncle of the Prince of Orange. The senior colonels, De Harsolte, Welderen, Aylva, and De Hornes, also received appointments, the two former as commissaries-general of cavalry, and the others as *sergents-majors* of infantry.

Prince John Maurice of Nassau, who was now sixty-four years of age, and had occupied the posts of Captain-General of Brazil, Governor of Wesel, and lieutenant-general of cavalry, had grown old in the service of the republic, to which he was about to devote the remaining years of his life, while earning for himself fresh glory. The command of the army seemed to devolve naturally on him, but his character was too mild and conciliatory to allow him to exercise the authority necessary for enforcing obedience. Moreover, his near relationship to the Prince of Orange caused him to be

suspected by the republican party. In spite of the reserve he had shown towards the Orange party, and the assurances of good-will repeatedly given him by the Grand Pensionary, he had not succeeded in disarming the suspicions and distrust of the States of Holland.

His colleague, Paul Wurtz, Baron of Ornholm, a native of the Duchy of Schleswig, was a soldier of fortune, and had acquired his military renown while commanding successively the armies of the Kings of Sweden and Denmark; he had been recommended to the States-General as a distinguished soldier by their envoys in the north, Amerongen and Ysbrandt, and on taking service with them had stipulated that the chief command should be given to him in conjunction with Prince John Maurice of Nassau. The States of Holland, who had urged his appointment, intended, if it were carried out, to oppose him to the Orange party; but the army, in which the Prince of Orange possessed a great number of devoted partisans, could with difficulty be brought to obey a chief whose military discipline was too inflexible. The inevitable difficulties that Wurtz consequently had to encounter in the exercise of his functions, soon disheartened him, and he gave in his resignation, to which he held in spite of the remonstrance of the deputies sent to him by the States of Holland. The Grand Pensionary, while not concealing from himself the faults of his character, succeeded at length in inducing him to reconsider his decision, by guaranteeing to him concessions which satisfied his self-esteem.

The Rhyngrave, Frederick Magnus, Count Salm, Governor of Maestricht, had been appointed to succeed Prince John Maurice of Nassau as lieutenant-general of cavalry. In spite of his great age and infirmities, he was noted for his indomitable valour; but he was too much preoccupied in providing means of defence for the fortress confided to his care, to trouble himself much about the other duties of his office.

The States of Holland, who distrusted him on account of his loyalty to the Orange party, had stipulated that the States-General should associate with him in his command the Prince of Tarentum, Henry Charles de la Trémouille, who

had served with distinction in the army of the United Provinces during the War of Independence, and had been appointed colonel of a regiment of cavalry by the Stadtholder Frederick Henry, whose great-nephew he was through his wife. After the peace of Münster, irritated at not being able to obtain recognition of his title of Prince, which gave him eventual rights to the crown of France, he had joined the party of the Prince of Condé, and though he had since become reconciled to Mazarin, had returned to Holland in the hope of obtaining there some important military command. He had sought to gain this by distinguishing himself in the war with the Bishop of Münster, at the same time letting slip no opportunity of paying his court to the deputies of the province, as well as to the Grand Pensionary. Appointed Governor of Bois-le-Duc, he had claimed the post of major-general, and the States of Holland had hoped to satisfy him by conferring on him that of lieutenant-general of cavalry.

Displeased at having to share office with the Rhyngrave, the Prince of Tarentum made no secret of his annoyance, but made advances to the Prince of Orange, whose restoration appeared to him to be at hand, and to whom he hoped to marry his daughter. Two years later he resigned all his offices, which brought him in an income of more than ten thousand crowns. The pretext he adduced for this renunciation was his recent abjuration, although the States-General did not consider his conversion to the Catholic religion as incompatible with his command; but in reality he did not choose to expose himself to the chance of having to fight for the United Provinces against the King of France, whose rupture with the republic he foresaw. De Witt expressed his regrets to him in these terms: 'Having been informed of your Highness's intention of resigning your appointments, I cannot help feeling great regret at seeing the State deprived of the services of a person who has shown towards it so much affection in the past, and who might be so useful to it in the future.'

The staff of the army was thus composed of chiefs jealous of one another, and from whom the reorganisation of the

troops was not to be expected. One of the officers in whom De Witt had the greatest confidence, Colonel Bampfield, writes to him: 'I could wish that everyone who holds a command in your army were a Cæsar, a Hannibal, or a Gustavus Adolphus; but being such as they many of them are, three months in camp will be of great use to them to enable them to learn the most necessary things before they meet the enemy.'

The Grand Pensionary was undoubtedly concerned about this military weakness, which imperilled the independence of the United Provinces, but he could not believe that their existence was in danger. Accustomed to look upon politics as a science, he was convinced that the King of France would not sacrifice his interests to his passions, and he allowed himself to be reassured by De Groot, who wrote: 'When the King's ministers wish to intimidate me by the number of the French troops, I ask how they will feed them, as the expenses of a campaign cannot be less than 13,700,000 florins for four months.' De Witt, however, was speedily undeceived, and forced to repent of having advised a policy of disarmament. A year had not elapsed since the disbanding of a portion of the army, before he was requesting the States-General to replace it on a war footing. He was the first to raise the alarm, while it was yet time, but did not succeed in gaining a hearing. 'No one,' writes Pomponne to Louis XIV., 'had shown more pacific dispositions, and if I may believe well-informed persons, no one now displays greater energy in favour of action. This is, in fact, quite in accordance with his character, and the time which he takes for deliberation before coming to a decision, is followed by great firmness when that decision is come to.'

The first defensive measures that he recommended to the States-General, and for which he hoped to obtain the co-operation of the States of Holland, were, besides the equipment of eighty ships of war, an increase of forty men in each company of infantry, and the raising of fifty regiments, which would reinforce the army by 50,000 men. At the same time, De Witt urged the States of Holland to select officers to fill

up the vacancies in the new regiments, and to give the preference to foreign over native officers, in order to prevent appointments being made through family interest. He was leaving no stone unturned to procure for the States an army by the time it would be wanted. 'The reason for all this,' writes Temple to Arlington, 'is: *Qu'on ne les trouve pas sans verd le printemps qui vient.*'

In answer to the Grand Pensionary's appeal, the States-General commissioned the Council of State to submit to them proposals for extraordinary supplies destined to provide for levies and armaments. When the States of Holland became aware of this, fearing that they might be involved in expenses too onerous for them, they would only consent to increase the effective force of the infantry companies by raising them from sixty-five to eighty men. Not being required to reinforce the regiment of guards or the two regiments of marines which made a part of their provincial contingent, and the numerical force of which consisted of a hundred men, they agreed, by way of compensation, to raise some companies at their own expense. The States-General contented themselves with this increase of their military forces, which only gave them a reinforcement of about 5,000 men. The army contingent was raised for the year 1671, from 31,600 to 37,155 men—34,555 foot and 2,600 horse—at a cost of 9,018,861 florins.

'The Grand Pensionary told me, two days ago,' writes the French ambassador, 'that if his advice were followed, there would be more extensive preparations made, not that there was any idea of a war, but because it was prudent to place oneself in a position to carry it on, if it should take place. He added that if the State were attacked, it ought not to have less than 100,000 men, to occupy all the fortified towns on its frontiers, and to keep a body of troops in the field.' It was not out of bravado that De Witt expressed himself thus to the Marquis de Pomponne; his correspondence with the Dutch ambassadors in London and Paris places beyond a doubt his eager solicitude for measures of defence. 'I agree with you,' he writes to Van Beuningen, in England, 'that the increase of the army and fleet would not only conduce to the honour of the State

and insure to it important advantages, but might even prevent a fresh war. I shall use all the means in my power to set forth the utility and necessity for such a measure.' 'I have succeeded in raising fresh debates on the subject of armament,' he announces with satisfaction to De Groot, 'in order that we may be in a position to resist all attacks by the beginning of next year.'

Alarmed at the invasion of Lorraine, which Louis XIV. had recently surprised and taken possession of, the States of Holland could no longer conceal from themselves the necessity for making important preparations, though unable to make up their minds to all those that the Grand Pensionary wished to obtain. They demanded of the States-General that ten regiments of infantry and six of cavalry should be raised, making an effective force of 17,000 men; that the roll of each company should be increased to one hundred foot and eighty horse, up to 15,000 men, independently of the artillery and of an army train which they were prepared to furnish as part of their contingent. The deputies of their Boards of Admiralty voted in addition for the equipment of a fleet which should consist of forty-eight vessels and frigates, with twelve fire-ships. The States-General approved the proposals of the States of Holland, and commissioned the Council of State to draw up a scheme of extraordinary armament on land and sea, of which they would arrange the division amongst the provinces. 'We must not sleep,' writes De Witt to Colonel Bampfield, quoting from the classics this formidable menace: '*Annibal erit brevi ad portas.*'

The debates which followed delayed the passing of the vote. The provinces of Guelders, Overyssel, and Utrecht, who did not consider themselves concerned in maritime armaments, were not disposed to agree to them, while the States of Holland made them a condition of their consent to the levies of land forces. To reconcile these differences, the Council of State only asked for 1,500,000 florins for the fleet, with which Holland was satisfied, while 3,000,000 florins were to be devoted to the army. It proposed in addition a fresh distribution, according to which the expenses of the naval equipment should in future

only be borne by the maritime provinces, Holland, Zealand, Friesland, and Groningen; while a larger proportion of the expenses of the army should be demanded from Guelders, Overyssel, and Utrecht. The States-General eagerly supported this arrangement, which was the more readily adopted that these three provinces gained by it a larger proportion of military appointments, which were thus placed at their disposal.

This agreement was nearly being destroyed by the unexpected opposition of Zealand, which was prolonged for two months by the intrigues of Odyk, the Prince of Orange's representative as senior noble in the Assembly of the States of the Province. Odyk had in the first instance shown himself favourable to military preparations, hoping thus to obtain for his brother, a captain of cavalry, the command of one of the regiments which were to be in the pay of Zealand. The new distribution proposed by the Council of State, imposing upon Zealand an increase of her naval contingent and relieving her of any augmentation in her contribution to the army, thus depriving that province for the future of the power of choosing new colonels, disappointed Odyk's expectations; and careless of all save his own personal interests, he persisted in refusing his consent, in spite of the favourable decision given by the principal towns of the province. The States of Holland complained vehemently of this conduct, and De Witt indignantly denounced 'the spirit of contradiction, which by an incredible fatality retarded a most important matter, to the great scandal of the friends of the country.' The steps taken to obtain the interference of the Prince of Orange removed this obstacle. The Princess Dowager having intervened and denounced Odyk to her grandson as a 'mischief-maker who might completely ruin his cause,' he was ordered to desist from his opposition, and at the beginning of the month of March 1671 the extraordinary war budget was at length carried.

The Council of State immediately repaired to the Assembly of the States-General, in order to compel all the provinces to provide, without further delay, the necessary financial means which De Groot urgently demanded. 'We must make our-

selves respected by the world, if we do not wish to be despised by it,' he writes to his habitual correspondent at the Hague, Wicquefort. 'He who plays the part of a sheep is eaten by the wolf: it is time that we put ourselves in a position to stand alone, as that is the only safety to be found in any policy.' This advice seemed the more justified that the arrival of the King of France in his new provinces of Flanders, where he had collected an army of 30,000 or 35,000 men, gave grounds for fearing an approaching invasion. A fleet of thirty ships, manned by 8,000 sailors and 2,800 marines, put to sea. Two divisions, each to consist of 14,000 foot and 3,000 horse, were destined, the one to guard the Yssel and the Rhine, the other for the protection of the Spanish Netherlands, in accordance with the plan of defence which the Grand Pensionary would have been glad to carry into execution without delay.

At the same time, to leave no opportunity for military rivalries, the Council of State settled the disputes respecting precedence amongst the cavalry officers of equal rank. Precedence was only allowed to general officers and colonels. It was only retained by the lieutenant-colonels and captains during a campaign, and was not to be given to those to be hereafter appointed. The infantry also obtained to a certain extent the satisfaction they demanded, and which it was hoped would contribute towards guaranteeing their good services.

These preparations for defence were still in part illusory. 'The matter of the levies,' wrote Pomponne some months before, 'was more or less warmly taken up according as the fears of the States with regard to France increased or diminished, and their fears were once more changed to confidence, when the King of France, after employing his troops in making earthworks, returned to Versailles.' The fleet was recalled into the harbours to remain there disarmed during the winter; the regiments were left in garrison; nothing was done but to collect the cavalry in detachments ready to take the field, and the levies which had been ordered were left incomplete.

It was not before the close of the year 1671 that the Council of State, becoming aware of the growing danger of the situation, and the imminence of a rupture, put forward

fresh proposals, urgently suggested by De Witt. The Grand Pensionary demanded a new naval armament which should consist of seventy-two ships, twenty-four frigates, and twenty-four fire-ships, at a cost of about seven millions. At the same time he represented the urgent necessity for a levy of 20,000 men, for which a sum of 2,027,531 florins should be added to the war budget in addition to a reserve fund of 3,000,000 with which it would be made up. These expenses were reduced by the States-General to forty-eight ships of war and twenty-five fire-ships, which were only to cost 4,776,000 florins, instead of 7,000,000, so as to reserve a surplus which would be employed for supplementary levies for the army. With this reservation, the proposals were adopted by the Federal Assembly, which returned them for deliberation to the States of the Provinces. The system of temporising which so greatly endangered the welfare of the republic was thus continued till the eve of the declaration of war.

The States of Holland had so far profited by these delays as to procure the funds required for paying the 16,000,000 florins voted for the military estimates, and of which they were to furnish the larger share; they were indebted for these resources to the vigilance of their First Minister, and to his financial genius. The necessary credit and money were not wanting, and they were bound to set an example of patriotism to the other provinces, which, with the exception of Zealand, whose finances were in a prosperous condition, had such difficulty in making both ends meet, that several of them had left their federal contingent in arrears, being unable to pay it.

To provide for the increase in military expenditure, the States of Holland had the choice between loans and taxation. The loans contracted during the last war with England had amounted to about seventeen millions of florins, and though the debt was still less by a million than it had been before its reduction, it had been raised to 5,580,956 florins, representing a capital of 125,000,000. Obliged to allow it to increase, as they had no fresh resources which they could devote to its redemption, they had been forced to content themselves with

the sinking fund which they had established in 1655 out of the proceeds of the savings made at that period by the reduction of the rate of interest, and of which the Grand Pensionary would not allow the destination to be changed. They were, moreover, averse from appealing again to the public by a fresh issue of stock, being honestly reluctant to entail upon the future the charges which they themselves were bound to provide for.

The Grand Pensionary would have preferred, therefore, the imposition of new taxes, in spite of the great number of those already laid on the taxpayers. He did not consider himself justified, except from the most imperative necessity, in augmenting the direct taxation, which was subdivided into a land tax and a tax on capital. The land tax was levied on income derived from land and houses; the tax on capital deducted sometimes a tenth and sometimes a fifth per cent. from all taxpayers whose property exceeded a thousand florins, and it was of so vexatious a nature that since the peace of Münster it had only been levied under exceptional circumstances, during the continuance of the two wars with England, in 1653 and 1666. Moreover, unless by readjustment, which would have provoked the most dangerous irritation, neither the land tax nor the tax on capital could be made productive, and the latter had never produced more than 600,000 florins.

Indirect taxation must, therefore, be had recourse to, but the opposition of the deputies of Amsterdam did not allow of its establishment. They refused to consent to any new tax so long as they had not obtained the suppression of the tax on freight (*last en veylgeldt*), which was a duty raised by the Boards of Admiralty on the import and export of merchandise. The Admiralty of Amsterdam was the only one rich enough to dispense with this tax, the others not being able to give it up without ruining themselves. The demands of the deputies of Amsterdam seemed, therefore, inadmissible, and the Grand Pensionary tried to induce them to desist from them by proposing a compromise: 'The preservation of harmony,' he writes, 'being in conformity with my temper and inclinations, as well as with the duties of my office.' He could not understand

how those who were alone in their opinion could pretend, contrary to all reason, to change the ideas of all the other members of the Assembly. 'If they will not allow themselves to be dissuaded,' he adds sadly, '*meo judicio actum erit de republica*, and it will only remain to me to throw upon the magistrates of Amsterdam the responsibility for the misfortunes which I foresee.' His persevering efforts were not without avail, and a month later he announced to Van Beuningen 'that the difficulties on account of which he had requested his conciliatory intervention being on the point of settlement, he was now in hopes of a speedy agreement.'

He hastened to take advantage of it in order to obtain the consent of the States to a tax on corn, which by doubling the mill and grinding duties would produce 350,000 florins a month. The low price at which wheat was sold, and the small amount of a tax which only cost the taxpayer a penny a week for wheaten bread and two farthings for rye bread, made this duty an easy one to raise. But the other provinces having refused to impose it, even for one year, the States of Holland felt themselves obliged to give it up, in order not to provoke the discontent of their subjects. They were no happier in an attempt at levying a tax on soap, and in vain tried to alter the duty on wine in order to render it more productive, by imposing it in the form of a direct tax on wholesale and retail houses. Difficulties in the way of collecting these new taxes prevented their being carried out.

The necessity for raising loans could no longer be evaded; it only remained to discover the mode which would impose the least burden on the public finances. A proposal for a loan of 1,500,000 florins on annuities was submitted to the States; the interest was to be capitalised at 4 per cent. for a period of forty-one years, leaving to the stockholders the right of withdrawing their capital after eighteen, twenty-five, or thirty-five years, as well as the power of investing it by companies of associates, with benefit to the survivor, in the same way that a tontine is instituted. Although such an operation was advantageous not only to the State, which it relieved of all payments for several years, but also to the lenders, who would

thus put by their income and deposit it in a sort of savings bank, it appeared too complicated to encourage subscriptions, and was unsuccessful.

A loan under the form of annuities seemed preferable. The Grand Pensionary made use of his mathematical and economical studies to realise it under the most advantageous conditions. He had studied in his leisure time the questions relating to it. He was no doubt unaware of the ingenious investigations of Pascal on the theory of the chances of human life, which, drawn up in 1654, were only published in 1679, under the title of 'Letters to De Fermat.'[1] He had, however, become familiar with the treatise composed by the famous Huyghens, who may have himself received assistance from Pascal. This treatise, entitled 'De Ratiociniis in Ludo Aleæ,' had been translated into Latin by the mathematical professor, Francis van Schoten, who had published some years before De Witt's work on curved lines. It rested on the fundamental proposition 'that the chances for or against any event may be represented by figures.' De Witt had determined to apply these laws of probability to the finances of Holland. With the assistance of John Hudde, former sheriff and councillor of Amsterdam, and curator of the Athenæum of that town, he caused statistics to be drawn up from the death registers, for the purpose of ascertaining the average length of life of fund-holders receiving annuities from the States of Holland. His letters to Van Beuningen, and the correspondence that he carried on with his brother-in-law, Deutz, show the interest he took in these investigations.

He soon perceived the advantage of the system of life annuities; in fact, this sort of loan limited the national debt to the duration of one generation, to the advantage of the State, which was no longer forced to throw upon the future the charges of the present; and at the same time to the advantage of private individuals, who, by the contingent investment of their savings, could insure for themselves the gain of considerable interests. The traditions of family feeling which

[1] De Fermat, one of the greatest of French geometricians, was the correspondent of Descartes, Pascal, and Huyghens.

had been preserved intact in Holland, prevented any fear that capital—that is to say, the children's heritage—might thus be involved from a spirit of speculation. It was, on the contrary, in the interest of the children, and with a view to insure to them a patrimony, that the Grand Pensionary demanded the establishment of annuities; and when his proposal had been adopted by the States, guardians of orphan children were expressly authorised to avail themselves of this investment for the benefit of their wards.

In order to dispose the States towards the system of loan which he favoured, De Witt was anxious to prove to them that the interest paid at different times for the establishment of annuities, from $16\frac{1}{2}$ to $8\frac{1}{3}$ per cent., exceeded the limit of advantages to which these annuities ought to give a claim. By the help of learned calculations he demonstrated, that by reducing them to $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on the lives of purchasers of annuities who were under age, the State was treating them as advantageously as the holders of perpetual annuities, to whom interest was paid at 4 per cent. These communications having been favourably received, he developed them in a remarkable report, which took the form of a treatise, accompanied by proofs certified to by his coadjutor, Hudde. 'As has been made clear to us by reasons which are perfectly well known to us,' he writes, 'it is much preferable to negotiate stock on annuities which are certain to be redeemed in the course of nature, rather than on perpetual annuities or redeemable stock. On the other hand, it is more advantageous for private individuals who employ the surplus of their savings in augmenting their capital, to invest their money in life annuities rather than in annuities or interest at 4 per cent., for although these same annuities are now being bought at $7\frac{1}{7}$ per cent., the profit upon them is comparatively much greater than upon an annuity of 4 per cent. I have, therefore, to submit very respectfully to their Noble and High Mightinesses the unanswerable proofs of my assertions, and feel bound at the same time to defer to their wish of having this demonstration in writing.'

This report, which was entered in the register of the

resolutions of the States, was distributed to the members of assembly under this title: 'On the Value of Life Annuities as compared with Perpetual Annuities.' It did honour to the Grand Pensionary's financial learning. In being the first to point out the method which might serve for the almost exact calculation of life annuities, De Witt had prepared the way for his famous successor, Halley, and to him must be ascribed the discovery of the tables of mortality to which twenty years later Halley gave the name which they still retain.

The States of Holland did not, however, think the moment opportune for immediately carrying out De Witt's proposals. Although willing to constitute life annuities, they did not venture to reduce the rate of interest at which they were paid, but left it at 7½ per cent. They had already commenced by borrowing at this rate 2,000,000 florins, to which they shortly after added another million, to reimburse the towns which had advanced that sum, in the vain hope of recovering it from the tax on corn which had not been collected. This financial operation having succeeded, two fresh loans of 3,000,000 florins were issued on the same conditions, and followed a few months later by two others of 4,000,000, in addition to 1,000,000 borrowed on perpetual annuities. These repeated loans were shortly to increase the amount paid in annuities from 5,580,956 florins, to which it had been reduced, to 11,000,000, of which a portion, however, was only a temporary liability.

In order that the credit of the province should be in no danger of injury, the States of Holland wisely determined to insure the payment of the interest by setting aside funds that would be at least sufficient to meet it. A duty of eight sous per florin was levied on the price of all seats in public carriages and boats. Private carriages and horses as well as yachts were subject to a tax varying from twenty florins for a one-horse carriage, to one hundred florins for a carriage and six. A tax of two sous on each cask was levied on beer. These two taxes were immediately farmed out, and the States obtained thus in advance the whole sum necessary for guaranteeing the repayment of the loans.

These funds not being sufficient, the Grand Pensionary proposed a further reduction in the annuities by lowering the rate of interest from 4 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., by which the State would benefit to the amount of 233,412 florins a year. In spite of his arguments, which were supported by the deputies of Dordrecht, Delft, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam, but opposed by those of Leyden and Haarlem, the States of Holland, fearing to give encouragement to still greater reductions in the future, stopped at a half measure; instead of lowering the rate of interest to the extent of one-half per cent. they contented themselves with deducting 5 per cent. from the interest, thus practically reducing it to $3\frac{3}{4}$ instead of $3\frac{1}{2}$. In order to have at their disposal the funds they required, the States of Holland were obliged to make up the difference by means of a deduction from their sinking fund, which the Grand Pensionary had wished to retain at its original amount, but which was reduced from 800,000 to 500,000 florins.

When it became necessary to provide not only for the preparations for war, but for war itself, the States could not rely on loans, nor on taxation intended merely to insure the redemption of the national debt. They were forced to demand fresh sacrifices from the taxpayers. Proposals were submitted to them for taxes on pipes, tobacco, and even on shoes and hats. They preferred to revive the tax of one-half per cent., which was levied on all personal and landed property, on title deeds, shares, book debts, ships, merchandise, plate, silver, jewels, furniture, salaries and wages, including even annuities, to the great detriment of the credit of the State. The municipal magistrates were made responsible for the payment of the taxes, and in consequence of the difficulty of collecting them the towns were required, on the suggestion of De Witt, to furnish the amount in advance for the country districts. Five weeks after it had been enacted, the tax of one-half per cent. was doubled and then trebled; whilst at the same time, the land tax was raised one-half, and the capitation tax re-established on three different scales, according to the means possessed by the taxpayers. It even became necessary later on to have recourse to a forced loan in money and plate, at

a rate of interest fixed first at 2 per cent. and then at 4 per cent.

The resolutions adopted by the States of Holland impelled the other provinces to submit to the taxation demanded of them, and enabled the States-General to levy contributions also from the Country of the Generality. Means were henceforth not wanting to enable the republic to support the burden of the expenses which the war was about to entail upon her. Such were the happy results of De Witt's skilful management of the finances of Holland, which ought to have been one of his most indisputable titles to the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen.

He had shown no less solicitude in pacifying internal differences, though he had not been able to prevent their revival. He had busied himself in putting an end to civil dissensions wherever they sprang up. His intervention had reconciled the parties which were disputing for power in the provinces of Groningen and Overyssel. He had been more especially anxious to restore harmony between all the members of the Assembly of the States of Holland, without which that province would no longer have retained the direction of the government of the republic. He had removed his two principal adversaries, Gaspard Fagel and Van Beuningen, who had detached themselves from the republican party, after having long served it; Fagel with impetuous ardour, and Van Beuningen with a fidelity which hitherto had not failed.

In order that he might no longer have anything to fear in the States of Holland from the formidable resistance of Fagel, in his position as Pensionary of Haarlem, De Witt offered him the post of Secretary to the States-General, vacant by the death of Nicholas Ruysch, one of his most trusted confidants. He had refrained from supporting the candidature of his first cousin, Vivien, in spite of the pressing demands of his aunt, Maria Van den Corput, and had disposed of the claims of the candidate of the province of Utrecht, Kinschott, who was afterwards appointed a Judge of the Court of Holland.

The success of Fagel's nomination having been secured by

means of the support given him by the States of Holland, his prerogatives of office were further extended, through the right conferred upon him of sitting on all committees of the Assembly of the States-General. Fagel having thus, by right of his important functions, become the second personage in the State, De Witt hoped to have thereby secured such titles to his gratitude as would assure him the valuable services he expected from his co-operation. His expectations were doomed to be disappointed. Fagel, whose portrait represents him with a broad forehead, denoting great powers of application, compressed lips and a sly expression of countenance, was as crafty as he was ambitious. While appearing to be on friendly terms with the Grand Pensionary, in order to obtain the post he coveted, he was much more concerned in gaining the favour of the Prince of Orange, in the hope of obtaining pardon for the part he had played with regard to the Perpetual Edict, and, while concealing his designs by a hypocritical pretence of agreement with De Witt, he was preparing to take the lead of the Orange party.

The Grand Pensionary counted, moreover, on insuring the success of his policy, by getting rid of Van Beuningen, who had not yet quitted the Hague to take up his post as ambassador at the English court. So long as the Prince of Orange had not been admitted into the Council of State, Van Beuningen, who was desirous of reopening for him the road to his ancestral power, had refused to absent himself. De Witt had vainly urged him to proceed to England, after the interview between the Duchess of Orleans and Charles II., in order that he might closely watch the course of negotiations between the courts of France and England. Van Beuningen replied 'that if the Grand Pensionary thought the matter so pressing, he could make the journey himself,' adding, 'that in his opinion there did not appear to be any necessity for so much precipitation.' But De Witt succeeded in bringing the States over to his views, and they imperatively insisted on the departure of their ambassador. Van Beuningen once out of the way, the Grand Pensionary profited by his absence to take active measures for securing the assistance and support of the town

of Amsterdam, whose defection might be the signal for a change of government. When Van Beuningen returned from England, he found the magistracy of that town once more reconciled to the republican party, from which he had wished to sever it.

The town of Amsterdam was divided between two rival factions, headed by Valkenier and Hoofdt, who were contending for the post of chief burgomaster. Valkenier had at first distinguished himself amongst the vehement defenders of the republican party, having been, with Fagel, foremost in voting for the Perpetual Edict. He had never ceased, moreover, to lavish flatteries on the Grand Pensionary, and at the period of his last election had been one of the first to propose the increase of his salary, even beyond the amount decided on by the States. Notwithstanding De Witt's habitual reserve with regard to his personal interests, he had displayed feelings of gratitude towards him, and had expressed himself as 'indebted to him for the satisfaction he had received.' This good understanding was soon troubled by the ambition of Valkenier, who, fearing to remain in a secondary position in the republican party, offered his services to the Orange party, in the hope of becoming one of its principal leaders. Sullen and envious, he was ardent in the pursuit of power, and very quick in discovering anything that he thought might be useful in opening to him a way into the government.

De Witt, unable to retain confidence in Valkenier, put forward in opposition to him Hoofdt, one of the leading members of the council of Amsterdam. According to Temple, 'Hoofdt was an honourable man, of noble sentiments, who had inherited great wealth from his ancestors. He had a frank and open disposition, and joined to considerable acquirements great delicacy of mind. But he lost a great part of his advantages owing to a heedlessness which he even liked to parade. He was satisfied with holding in his hand all the power that can be obtained in a town, without seeking for it or making use of it.' The Grand Pensionary succeeded in getting him appointed burgomaster. 'M. de Witt,' writes Pomponne, 'regains thus, by means of this town

which has so much weight in the assemblies, that influence which for some time past had been lost to him. The party of the Prince of Orange has now been worsted.' 'In the letter you have done me the honour of addressing to me,' writes Pomponne again to Lionne, 'you are correct in your supposition as to the mortification which M. van Beuningen has felt in consequence of this. Although he has fallen back on philosophy, his philosophy has hitherto imposed on no one. He openly professes that he wishes to enjoy the tranquil haven into which a species of tempest seems to have driven him, and to take advantage of the repose which he would never have found in public business, and which he experiences by withdrawing from it. But though he talks thus stoically to everybody, no one believes him.'

The success, little more than apparent, which De Witt had obtained, was but ephemeral, and Louis XIV. was rejoicing over the fresh rivalries which appeared to him imminent. 'I was very glad to hear,' he writes to Pomponne, 'that, in the election of the new burgomaster of Amsterdam, the party of Van Beuningen had yielded to that which opposed him, and which was supported by De Witt; because this success, which increases for the moment the authority of the Grand Pensionary and weakens the influence of the Prince of Orange, will only serve to make De Witt more irreconcilable with the King of England and with those who wish for the Prince's elevation. This incident cannot fail, moreover, to increase the bitterness and hostility of those persons who have a share in the government of the United Provinces, so that, whichever way I consider it, I find it equally good and advantageous for my interests.' The demands of the Orange party, and the hesitation and resistance of the republican party, which would not recognise in time the necessity for giving a chief to the army, in view of an approaching war, were soon to justify these forebodings of evil.

Disputes were renewed on the occasion of the salary demanded for the Prince of Orange as Councillor of State. The States-General were disposed to grant him 25,000 florins, half of which was to be paid by the States of Holland. The latter,

notwithstanding the proposal of the members of the nobility, would not agree to a larger grant than 12,500 florins, and were supported by the Council of State. They demanded that the Prince's salary should be paid in part out of the federal budget appropriated to the ordinary war expenditure, and would not themselves contribute more than 2,500 florins, requiring at the same time an increase of pay for the two major-generals. The Council of State opposed this division of expenses; the other provinces, ill-disposed towards Major-General Wurtz, who was distrusted by the Orange party, opposed the proposal to raise the pay of the chiefs of the army, and the States of Guelders declared that they would only consent to it on condition that a salary of 25,000 florins was granted to the Prince of Orange. These disputes had already revived old rivalries between the Provinces, when the appointment of a captain-general, being forced upon the States-General before the period that they had fixed upon, destroyed the accord brought about with so much difficulty by the Grand Pensionary.

By the terms of the convention concluded under the name of 'Act of Harmony,' which had opened to the son of William II. the entrance to the Council of State, the Prince of Orange could not be appointed, or even proposed, as captain-general till he had completed his twenty-second year, which he would only attain in November 1672. This convention, whose chief aim had been to pronounce the offices of stadtholder and captain-general incompatible, by forbidding the union in the same hands of the military and civil power, guaranteed the continuance of the republican government; De Witt, therefore, thought it advisable not to allow any further discussion of the Act lest it should be in any way imperilled. Moreover, the youth of the Prince, his presumed ignorance of military science, and the intercourse he was keeping up with his uncle Charles II. at the moment when that King was negotiating with the King of France a coalition against the republic, justified in some measure the distrust which was shown towards him. The Grand Pensionary could not consent to the defence of the Fatherland being committed to him before he had earned

the confidence of the nation, and wished him to begin by accompanying the army as a member of the Council of State, in order thus to prepare himself to command it.

This prudent policy of waiting was counteracted by the hostility of the States of Guelders reviving the animosity between the Orange and the republican parties. On the occasion of the disputes relative to the salary of the Prince as Councillor of State, the States of Guelders had conferred on him the title of captain- and admiral-general elect. The deputies of Holland to the States-General gave dangerous publicity to this resolution by denouncing it as contrary to the engagements that had been entered into to adjourn any election in favour of the Prince of Orange till he had completed his twenty-second year, and they required the deputies of Guelders to expunge from the records of the Federal Assembly the debate of the States of their province. The latter would not allow themselves to be dictated to. They desired their deputies to put plainly before the States-General the necessity for anticipating the appointment with regard to which they were accused of having illegally taken the initiative.

The Orange party responded to this appeal with an impetuosity that carried away all the provinces, including that of Utrecht, which, though accustomed to follow the lead of Holland, joined in the movement. The hope, by giving satisfaction to his nephew, of diverting the King of England from a defection which became each day more threatening, could not fail to encourage this movement. The Prince of Orange himself came forward. Not satisfied with writing to the principal deputy of the States of Utrecht, Amerongen, who had just been appointed minister of the States-General at the court of the Elector of Brandenburg, begging him not to leave till he had assumed the direction of this business, which, he said, was making a great sensation, he took advantage of a visit paid him by the Grand Pensionary to represent to De Witt that, having entered upon his twenty-second year, he ought not to be obliged to wait till he had completed it, before being appointed captain-general. The Grand Pensionary appealed with inflexible obstinacy to the letter of the Act of

Harmony, and did not conceal from him his surprise at his pretensions. But the States of Holland, on whom De Witt counted to get the better of the Prince, disappointed his expectations, at the moment when he was hoping to bring over the other provinces to more conciliatory dispositions. 'What is deplorable,' he writes, 'is, that it is the members of Holland who, in their immoderate zeal, wish, by breaking solemn conventions, to aid in laying the foundations of servitude.'

Early in December the deputies of Enckhuysen ventured to demand all at once the immediate nomination of the Prince of Orange as captain-general, and the nobles who were present at the sitting eagerly supported their proposal. The Grand Pensionary, as may be inferred from the curious manuscript letter to his brother, did not allow himself to be disconcerted, and demanded, in order that nothing should be done hurriedly, that the question should be put on the orders of the day. In the afternoon sitting, he represented vehemently to the States that the proposal of Enckhuysen ought not to be taken into consideration. He opposed it as dangerous to the republic; according to him, all sorts of dangers might result if the command of the army were hastily given over to a young prince who had as yet had no opportunity of showing his military talents. De Witt, moreover, pleaded the instructions he had received, and the oath he had sworn, and declared that he could not without breaking it allow the reversal of previous resolutions, unanimously agreed to, to be put to the vote. The authority with which he spoke cut short all discussion for the time being.

The deputies of Leyden and Haarlem, who had at first pronounced in favour of the proposal of the deputies of Enckhuysen, contented themselves with giving notice that they should consult their municipalities. They demanded, however, that the proposals for such levies should be adjourned, declaring that they would refuse their consent to the increase of the army so long as it had not the Prince of Orange for its chief. 'Amongst the deputies of the towns of Holland,' writes the French correspondent Bernard, 'there are some, though few, who are in favour of the House of

Orange from inclination, others from ambition, or to annoy those who are at present at the head of affairs. As for the greater number, they consider that a chief ought to be given to the army in the present conjuncture. Even Major-General Wurtz has declared that he should serve more willingly and with greater success if the Prince were placed at the head of the army, because his officers would show greater obedience, and his soldiers more courage. M. de Ruyter says the same with regard to the sailors, so that there are some who not only consider that it would be advantageous, but that it is indispensable that this election should be made.'

The necessity for speedily terminating this difficulty obliged the Assembly to consult the councillor-deputies, who were more especially charged with the conduct of military affairs. Only five of them took part in the deliberations, and they pronounced unanimously in favour of the appointment of the Prince of Orange. They invoked the recollection of Prince Maurice of Nassau, who had been entrusted with the command of the army at the age of eighteen; urged the necessity of giving speedy satisfaction to the populace, the army, and the other provinces; dwelt upon the hopes of a reconciliation with England; and represented that the anticipation by a few months of an appointment so advantageous to the country, would in no way strike at the principle guaranteed by the Act of Harmony.

A debate could no longer be avoided, and three days later it was resumed with all the vehemence of the passions which divided the Assembly. The nobles and the deputies of Amsterdam, Leyden, Haarlem, and Enckhuysen approved the proposal of the councillor-deputies, and nearly all the deputies of the small towns appeared also disposed to support it. But the deputies of Dordrecht, Rotterdam, Delft, Hoorn, Gouda and Alkmar, as well as those of Monnikendam and Brill, were opposed to any derogation from the conventions of the Act of Harmony. The deputies of Dordrecht offered the most vehement opposition to such a course. They were encouraged in their suspicions and doubts by Jacob de Witt, who could not forget that he had been one of the

victims of the attempt of the last stadtholder. They protested against a concession which, according to them, would only be to the demands of preachers and the lower orders, and declared that they would not submit to slavery for the purpose of purchasing the alliance with England. The unexpected support, however, which the appointment of the Prince of Orange met with in the Assembly of which the republican party had hitherto been the masters, showed De Witt that he must no longer remain intractable. He was forced to recognise that the public interest was engaged in this appointment. 'It is asserted,' he writes to De Groot, 'that it may have the happy result of inducing concord in the State, by giving satisfaction to the other provinces, by restoring confidence to the army, and by disposing the people to support taxation more willingly.' In accordance with his proposal and the urgent request of the deputies of Zealand, the States of Holland resolved to bring under deliberation the instructions intended for the captain-general.

This resolution gave the republican party hopes of gaining time. The Grand Pensionary was still confident of being able to delay or, at least, to lessen the danger by the precautions he meant to take for preventing a change of government. At his suggestion, the commissioners of the States of Holland, who were associated with the councillor-deputies for the purpose of drawing up a plan of action, demanded and obtained that the captain-general of the United Provinces should be obliged to swear to maintain the Perpetual Edict suppressing the stadtholdership in the province of Holland, and prohibiting its re-establishment.

After some days' consideration, they approved also the principal articles destined to limit the powers of the commander-in-chief of the federal army. In accordance with the Act of Harmony, the captain-general was to be declared ineligible to the office of stadtholder of any other province, and must even promise to refuse it if offered. From excess of precautions, the prerogatives of the stadtholdership, that is to say, the appointments to municipal offices, intervention in matters of religion, justice, police, and finance, and media-

tion in the case of disputes between the provinces, were excluded from his functions. He was not even to exercise by way of compensation those which seemed inseparable from his office. He could not directly appoint the officers of the army, and had only the right of recommending them either to the States of the Provinces, or to the States-General, according to the importance of their rank, and he had no power to dispose of the commands of fortresses, except in the case of those conquered from the enemy. Moreover, he was not authorised to issue directly the *patents*, that is to say, the marching orders for troops in the territory of the provinces. Lastly, his authority was subject to that of the commissioners, who in times of war stood towards him in the place of the States-General; he was charged with carrying out the decisions arrived at by them by a majority of votes, and must content himself with the right of assisting at their deliberations, and giving his opinion first, which he could repeat in case of an equal division of votes. Not only was the separation between the civil and the military authority thus guaranteed, but the military authority was henceforth only to be exercised within narrow limits, which placed obstacles in the way of princely domination.

Precautions so restrictive as these, but which might readily have been agreed to, ought to have appeared sufficient; but instead of declaring themselves satisfied, the defenders of the republican government demanded that the term of office of the captain-general should be limited to a single campaign, while the partisans of the Prince of Orange wished it to be conferred for life. They thus provoked a conflict with other provinces, and at the same time rendered fresh divisions within the States of Holland inevitable. Animosities which had been appeased rather than quenched were revived, and the Assembly found itself once more divided into two hostile parties.

On one side, the nobles and deputies of Enckhuysen, Haarlem, and Leyden demanded that the command should be conferred for life, considering this indispensable to the authority which the captain-general ought to exercise over the troops, and to the wise direction of military affairs. On the other

hand, the deputies of Dordrecht, Delft, and Rotterdam rejected it, and declared that the Prince of Orange ought to be the less exacting in his demands as he would have already the advantage of an appointment to which his age did not as yet give him any right. They represented, moreover, that no permanent engagement could without danger be entered into with him till he had shown what he was capable of in a temporary command. The deputies of Amsterdam, while pronouncing in favour of a life appointment, were anxious for conciliatory measures, and demanded that the question of the command for life should be postponed till the legal term fixed by the Act of Harmony, provided the entry into office of the Prince of Orange, if only for a single campaign, were not delayed any longer.

The Grand Pensionary saw that he could not refuse to accept this proposal. He feared that the Council of Amsterdam might send Van Beuningen, who had returned from his embassy to London, to the Assembly of the States, and that he would not fail to contend with him for the direction of the government. He therefore hastened to put an end to the discussion by submitting to the States-General the instructions which the States of Holland had drawn up for the captain-general. These instructions having been adopted by the States-General, he demanded of the States of Holland the immediate nomination of the Prince. He then caused it to be decided that the command should only be conferred on him temporarily, with the power of renewing it for life when the condition of age stipulated by the Act of Harmony should be fulfilled.

The States-General were not satisfied, and addressed to the States of Holland long-drawn-out remonstrances, taking care, however, to do so only in a private letter, in the hope that an agreement might more easily be come to. The States of Holland repaired in a body to the Federal Assembly in order to reply to this message, and communicated to them the resolution they had just come to, and from which they would not depart. The following day they confirmed this notification by a manifesto in which they announced 'that they had gone

as far as they could go' in anticipating by several months the nomination of a captain-general, and they refused to make it definite before the Prince of Orange should have completed his twenty-second year. They protested that, in case of the refusal of the other provinces, 'it was not they who would be responsible for the national misfortunes.'

The Prince of Orange, however, was very nearly obliging them to attend to the remonstrances of the States-General, by refusing to accept the post of captain-general in the event of his commission being limited to the duration of one campaign. Feeling certain of the dispositions of the two major-generals, who, failing him, were determined to decline the offer of the chief command, he sent word to the States of Holland 'that they might spare themselves the trouble of sending any deputies to him, because he would regret to have to send them back with a refusal.' His best friends tried in vain to dissuade him from what they considered a youthful act of indiscretion. Van Beuningen, who, after being the principal agent of dissension, had joined the party of conciliation, advised him, according to a French correspondent, 'to accept, at any price, what had been resolved on by the deputies of Holland.' But he had to fight against the influence of Fagel, who, in order to push matters to extremity, encouraged the views of the Prince, on whom Van Beuningen had difficulty in making any impression, 'that young gentleman being tolerably firm and tolerably positive in his disposition.'

The attitude of the Prince of Orange could not fail to arouse the aggressive temper of the other provinces, and caused his partisans to regret the concessions to which they had yielded. The deputies of Leyden represented that, if Holland could not succeed in getting her opinion shared by the other provinces, it was absolutely necessary that she should yield to their wishes if the republic were not to be completely ruined. According to the curious manuscript of Vivien, Pensionary of Dordrecht, which so usefully completes the official account of the sittings, the deputies of Delft and Gouda had already sent to the Grand Pensionary a summons to proceed to a fresh deliberation. De Witt had cause to fear

that a capitulation would be inevitable, and, in order to avoid being reduced to this extremity, he acknowledged without further hesitation the necessity for a compromise. He announces this to his brother in a confidential letter which has been preserved in the family archives: 'In consequence of the disposition shown by certain members of the States of Holland, I could not do otherwise,' he writes, 'than set to work in the hope of bringing the matter to a favourable termination, with the approbation of the deputies of Dordrecht, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam, and I am now discussing it with Beverningh and Fagel. We have agreed upon a scheme which I have consented to communicate to the deputies of Holland, with the view of trying afterwards to get it accepted by the States-General.'

This scheme, as it had been suggested by the members of the committee on military affairs, and more especially by Ripperda de Buyrse, had for its object to bring about by anticipation a preliminary agreement on the definitive instructions to be given to the captain- and admiral-general when the Prince of Orange should have accomplished his twenty-second year; it only conferred on him as admiral-general an honorary title, which was to be granted to him at once provisionally, but would give him neither in the present nor in the future any authority over the commander-in-chief of the fleet. This was the best security that could be taken for preventing the definitive appointment being further delayed or hindered by fresh discussions. With this view, four provinces—Guelders, Zealand, Friesland, and Groningen—took the initiative in announcing that they now made choice of the Prince of Orange to be captain- and admiral-general for life, as soon as he should have attained the legal age, and that no further vote on the subject was to be required of them. Two other provinces—Utrecht and Overyssel—made the same declaration, while making their definitive consent dependent on the unanimous agreement of the provinces, to avoid offending Holland.

Unless the States of Holland chose to enter upon a path from which they could not turn aside, and whose dangers they

could not conceal from themselves, they must agree to the proposal for regulating in advance the conditions under which the commander-in-chief was to enter upon his office when he received his appointment for life. Five days after the first proposals had been made by the Grand Pensionary to their Assembly, they met together on Tuesday, February 23, 1672, and at four o'clock in the afternoon they arrived at an agreement. They began by conferring on the Prince of Orange the powers of captain-general limited to one expedition and subordinated to the conditions which they had already drawn up. To satisfy the States-General, they not only confirmed by an express declaration all his prerogatives as a Councillor of State, but they also granted him the command of all the troops, including those of the militia in the pay of the towns, which they had at first proposed to refuse him, and only excepting the companies of body-guard and cavalry which should be in garrison in their capital. They would not, however, consent as yet to appoint him, even nominally, admiral-general, for fear of striking an apparent blow at the authority of Ruyter, who possessed their entire confidence. These provisions being settled, they unanimously approved the scheme of definitive instructions, and placed on the orders of the day of their assembly in November, at which period the Prince of Orange would have completed his twenty-second year, his appointment as captain- and admiral-general for life.

The next day the States-General held a solemn sitting, at which all the members of the Federal Assembly assisted, to the number of thirty-three. Having secured the consent of the Prince of Orange, who was now satisfied with the guarantees given him for the approaching future, they conferred on him the temporary command of the army, and proclaimed him captain-general. Their resolution was solemnly communicated to him by the Secretary Fagel, who invited him to repair to their Assembly, in order to be invested in his office and to take the oath of fidelity to his instructions. On the day following he was received with all the honours due to his rank. While the joyful acclamations of the populace were sounding without, the President, Van Ghent, deputy of Guelders,

addressed to him a speech, in which he reminded him of his ancestors' services and encouraged him to continue their work, and thus to justify the hopes of the nation.

The States of Holland did not wish to appear less assiduous. They yielded to the wish of the Prince of Orange by fixing his pension as Councillor of State, which had not yet been definitively voted, at 12,500 florins. The nobles and the deputies of eleven towns recorded also their consent to his eventual nomination as captain- and admiral-general for life. Finally, the assembly deputed commissioners to convey to him the solemn congratulations of all its members. The Prince did not fail to respond to these attentions. He entertained them in the great hall of the palace, which had been placed at his disposal, at a magnificent banquet, of which the bill of fare [1] has been preserved in contemporary accounts, and which was prolonged till two o'clock in the morning. The Prince concluded it by proposing a toast, in return for which his health was drunk to the sound of flourishes of trumpets and salvos of artillery welcoming the new chief of the army. Concord seemed happily restored; but distrust and rivalry still existed on both sides. By holding out too long against the appointment of the Prince of Orange to the command of the army, De Witt had lost the benefit of the concessions which he had at last made. The delay that had taken place in the definitive nomination of a captain-general, and the restrictions placed upon his military authority, could not fail to perpetuate the grievances of the Orange party, while giving to the republican party only transitory guarantees, which were more apparent than real.

The Grand Pensionary took advantage, however, of this appointment to repair lost time, by no longer delaying the adoption of defensive measures which had been postponed till the Prince of Orange had been invested with the chief command. It was necessary to provide speedily for the

[1] The bill of fare comprised 600 pigeons, 110 turkeys, 500 partridges, 163 pheasants, 800 larks, 4 wild boars, 40 lambs, 16 calves, 8 deer, 40 hams, 500 pounds of French sweetmeats, 4 cases of oranges, 600 pears, 400 apples, and 250 pasties, large and small. The wines were Rhine, Chablis, Ay, and Frontignan.

organisation of the staff of the army. The States-General had already selected the deputies to the camp who were to represent the sovereign powers of the Federal Assembly with the new captain-general; the members chosen to form part of this Council of War were: Cornelius de Witt and Beverningh for Holland; Ripperda de Buyrse for Guelders; Crommon for Zealand; Schade for Utrecht; Couvorden, Lord of Stouvelar, for Overyssel; Ysbrandt for Friesland; and Gokkinga for Groningen.

The use made of their powers by the deputies to the camp gave but a vain pretext for the recriminations of the partisans of the Prince of Orange, who had little to complain of beyond the obstacles sometimes put in the way of the movements of the army, in accordance with the prerogatives reserved to the States of the Provinces, with regard to the passage of troops through their territory. Beverningh, who was allowed by the commissioners of the States-General the chief direction, never failed to support all the measures proposed by the captain-general, and succeeded in having them carried out. While continuing to keep up a constant correspondence with De Witt, he proved himself a most devoted adviser to the Prince of Orange, 'towards whom he felt a growing affection,' having no other wish than to maintain entire agreement with him, in the interest of the defence of the country. The Grand Pensionary showed no less eagerness to satisfy all the wishes of the new chief of the army. He wrote to him with punctual regularity, and apologised when he was hindered by the business which pressed upon him. Being careful to spare him all annoyance, he was not satisfied with intervening to obtain the confirmation of the choice of officers recommended by the Prince, but was often the means of obtaining for him full powers in the making of military appointments, thus giving him loyal support. The captain-general consequently found himself surrounded by allies rather than rivals in authority, and in spite of all appearance to the contrary unity was maintained in the command.

The choice of general officers, which was contended for amongst the provinces, was only settled after a prolonged

contest. The two major-generals, Prince John Maurice of Nassau, and Wurtz, were confirmed in their appointments, with the exceptional pay of 20,000 florins. In spite of his advanced age, Prince John Maurice placed himself with a readiness worthy of all praise under the orders of a general of two-and-twenty. The Rhyngrave was given, as general, the command of the cavalry, with two lieutenant-generals under him: John of Welderen, who had till now been commissary-general of the cavalry, and the Count of Nassau-Saarbruck, who had distinguished himself in the battle of St. Gothard gained over the Turks, and won a well-earned reputation for courage. 'He had always been strongly attached to the interests of the Prince,' writes a contemporary; 'he only unbent to him, being proud and haughty with everyone else.' The command of the infantry was given to Frederick of Nassau, Lord of Zuylestein. His two lieutenant-generals were Count Königsmark, a native of Sweden, and William of Aylva, called a second Mars, who had already served valiantly by sea and land, and who belonged to one of the most illustrious families of Friesland; Count Hornes, *sergent-major* of the army, was given the post of master-general of ordnance. Viscount John Barton de Montbas, a native of France, brother-in-law of the ambassador De Groot, was chosen, concurrently with Steenhuysch, Lord of Heuwe, commissary-general of the cavalry, in spite of the dislike shown towards him by the Prince of Orange, which was so sadly justified. Colonel Kirkpatrick and Count Styrum (a near relation of the Prince through his grandmother) received commissions as *sergents-majors* of infantry, and Moyse Pain et Vin that of quartermaster-general. The fleet retained the leader whom it was accustomed to obey with entire confidence. The States-General renewed Ruyter's powers as commander-in-chief for the campaign about to be opened, and fixed his pay at 500 florins a month, besides allowing him at his own request a company of soldiers as his guard. They chose as lieutenant-admirals Van Nès, Joseph van Ghent—whose brother, Joachim van Ghent, was a lieutenant-colonel in the army, and who as well as his brother met with a glorious death the same year in the service of

his country—Adrian Banckert, and John William of Aylva, who was afterwards transferred as lieutenant-general to the army. The two former commanded the squadrons of Holland, Banckert that of Zealand, and Aylva that of Friesland. In accordance with the proposals of the States of Holland, Cornelius de Witt, deputy of the Council of War, was appointed deputy-plenipotentiary to the fleet. Having obtained the consent of the magistracy of Dordrecht, under whose orders he was, he accepted the mission, declaring to the States of Holland that, 'however dangerous it might be, he was ready in obedience to them to employ, with the blessing of God, all his care and all his efforts in accomplishing it with zeal and fidelity.' Convinced that a show of complete power was necessary to his authority, he induced them to place under his orders a detachment of ninety-four sailors, with a guard of twelve soldiers dressed as halberdiers and bearing the arms of the States on their uniform. The two deputies who were associated with him not having responded to the appeal made to them, the States-General, in compliance with his wishes, determined not to appoint any successors to them. 'They wished thus,' writes the Grand Pensionary to his brother, 'to cut short any ideas of dissension, negligence, or distrust, which might arise; and, convinced that everything is in good order in the fleet, they are anxious to show how satisfied the government is with your behaviour and your firmness.' Cornelius de Witt henceforth shared with no one the confidential mission which he had received, and which he was worthy to fulfil.

To prevent the naval operations being divulged, the States-General gave full powers to the committee which they appointed for the affairs of the navy, and excused it from rendering any account to the Federal Assembly or to the Provincial Assemblies. The President of the States-General for the week, assisted by the Secretary, was on this secret committee, the reports of which continue from March 19 till August 13, 1672. The Grand Pensionary of Holland retained the direction of it, and gave constant proofs of his watchful solicitude. At his suggestion all necessary measures were

taken to guarantee the safety of the ports and of the coasts of Holland. In addition to this the equipment of the fleet was no longer delayed. On the suggestion of the Grand Pensionary, the States of Holland approved the proposal to put to sea forty-eight vessels and to enlist 10,000 sailors, the States-General ratifying forthwith a resolution in favour of which they had already given their decision.

Six weeks later, a fresh expenditure of 2,196,000 florins was voted for the equipment of the fleet, which was to consist, for the approaching campaign, of more than 130 ships, of which 75 were to be line-of-battle ships and frigates. The Council of State, not satisfied with this armament, made a further demand for the construction of eighteen reserve vessels, which, having at first been adjourned, was finally decreed, with the eager consent of the States of Holland. In a long letter written to his brother-in-law, Hoeuft, member of the Admiralty of the Meuse, De Witt urged him to cause the contingent of the Dutch squadrons to be completed; he begged him to use his utmost efforts, 'in order that we may,' added he, 'put into execution our old national motto, *Vigilate Deo confidentes*.'

The land armaments could not be carried out equally promptly or efficiently, in spite of the persevering efforts of the Grand Pensionary. Convinced at length that the war with France was inevitable, so far back as the end of the preceding year he had been of opinion that the same measures should be taken which would be employed if it were already begun. The army, in spite of the last levies, did not consist of more than 37,000 men, who were not all under arms. The proposal for a fresh levy of 20,000 men had remained in abeyance, in consequence of internal divisions. As soon as the preliminary deliberations with regard to the nomination of a captain-general had begun to restore concord, this levy was agreed to by the States of Holland, and the States-General gave it their approval. A sum of 4,300,000 florins was appropriated to it. It was to be effected within a space of six or eight weeks, and to comprise ten regiments of infantry and twelve of cavalry, representing 14,000 foot and 6,000 horse.

The strength of the army was thus raised nominally to 57,000 men, but did not really exceed 52,000.

Notwithstanding the urgent advice of the Grand Pensionary, the States-General stopped short in these measures; a proposal of the Council of State, demanding a second levy of 22,500 men, 19,600 foot, 900 horse, and 2,000 dragoons, remained under discussion till the month of April. In order to get it voted, the States of Holland declared themselves determined to take upon themselves, as their share, the cost of 12,000 men, whom they would form into a reserve corps for the defence of their province, and of whom they alone would have the right to dispose. The States-General, alarmed at this proposal, which would have struck a blow at their military authority, ended by giving their consent to the fresh reinforcements demanded of them, and the States of Holland did not persist in their demands. The army put on a complete war footing was to cost 9,000,000 florins, and to consist of 80,000 men, whom De Witt would have liked to increase to 107,000.

The Grand Pensionary worked indefatigably, in order that these levies should be neither tardy nor incomplete. He advised the States of Holland to encourage good patriots to take part in them by raising at their own expense soldiers and sailors, for whose payment they should receive commissions in acknowledgment of the services they had rendered. His correspondence throughout the months of February, March, and April 1672, and the letters of one of the Prince of Condé's agents at Brussels, Don Gomez Diaz, show the relations he was keeping up in Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, for the purpose of pressing on the despatch of the expected reinforcements, and preventing the active measures of French diplomacy from putting obstacles in their way. 'I hope,' he writes to Duke Bernard of Holstein, 'that I may soon be able to congratulate you, when you do me the favour of informing me that you have under your hand the three companies which are still wanting to your regiment, because, not doubting that your Highness has made choice of good officers, I would fain believe that the latter will acquit themselves in a few days of what they owe to their own honour

and the service of the republic.' Thanks to this eagerness, the orders of the States were promptly carried out; not only was it possible to complete almost entirely the first levy of 20,000 men, but measures were also taken that the next one, of 22,000 men, should be no longer delayed.

The employment of reserve troops was also decided upon, in order that all the able-bodied population might be summoned to the defence of the country. On the report of Vivien, the States of Holland submitted to the councillor-deputies for their consideration the proposal for a general armament, in which the city of Amsterdam had taken the initiative. After an agreement had been concerted with the States-General the executive measures were specified in a report drawn up by the Grand Pensionary, and the States of Holland hastened to vote them. They comprised the enlistment of militiamen (*Waartgelders*), of citizens, and of peasants.

The militia formerly set on foot but soon disbanded by the second stadtholder, Maurice of Nassau, was recruited and paid at the expense of the towns. It was to comprise 20,000 men, of whom 10,000 were to be called out first. Holland, completing at once the contingent to be provided by her, took for her share 5,830, divided into forty-five companies, each consisting of 120 or 130 men. The militia was not only intended for garrison duty, but might also be sent into the field to serve as a reinforcement for the army.

The States of Holland also perceived the necessity for calling the inhabitants of the towns to the defence of the country, and engaged to furnish a contingent of 5,325 citizens. On the proposal of the Grand Pensionary, they resolved to arm and drill them, forming them for this purpose into companies of arquebusiers in which substitutes should not be sanctioned; and they required the magistrates to provide for their equipment and supplies. The same steps were taken by the States of Groningen, Zealand, and Utrecht, who promised to send to the army a reinforcement of 1,000 men. The States-General enforced military service on the inhabitants of the other provinces, and sent important detachments of burgher companies

to defend the coast, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel de Bye, Lord of Albrantsward, Grand Master at the court of the Prince of Orange.

At the same time the peasants were put in requisition for the various entrenchment works. They were obliged to go through a firing drill at least once a week, and were divided into twenty-eight regiments, distributed by villages in companies consisting of about eighty men. By the terms of the resolution adopted by the States-General and reported by the Grand Pensionary to the States of Holland, the peasants of Guelders, Utrecht, Overyssel, and Holland, were drawn up in different detachments, to the number of 12,000 men, of whom 4,250 were recruited by Holland and a part of them despatched to the camp.

Efforts, therefore, were not being spared, nor were preparations wanting to render the land defences less inadequate, but time failed to reap the benefit of these military resources, and to give the country the impetus of resistance. The cost of recruiting proved an obstacle to the last levies; each horseman costing one hundred crowns, while the foot soldiers were paid from fifteen to twenty-two florins. The inexperience of the officers and the want of discipline of the troops, moreover, was a constant cause of complaint. While the citizens still responded with some eagerness and good-will to the appeal of the States, no service was to be expected from the peasants, who refused to allow themselves to be enlisted. A century earlier, it is true, in their struggles with the troops of the Duke of Alva, the towns of the United Provinces, and more especially those of Holland, had distinguished themselves by the heroic intrepidity of their inhabitants; but then, what powerful motives urged them on! For them the independence of their Fatherland and liberty of conscience were not alone at stake; the safety of each individual was in question, and moved even the most indifferent. The cruelties of the Spaniards, who had attempted to quench the rebellion in the blood of their victims, without pity for women or children, placed an insurmountable obstacle in the way of reconciliation. Moreover, the militia of the towns was commanded by chiefs as experienced as they

were brave. But even then many fortified towns were on the point of being surrendered without resistance.

Matters were quite different on the eve of a war which was about to set the republic at issue with the two most powerful monarchies of Europe. The nation no longer felt itself carried away by the necessity imposed on everyone of saving, at the cost of any sacrifice, his family, his fortune, and his life. A peace of four-and-twenty years had unaccustomed the country to war; internal divisions had weakened her, while the love of ease, consequent upon the prosperity of her commerce and finances, had not failed to enervate her people. They only cared to enjoy their wealth, without show or ostentation, in the shelter of the domestic hearth; their beautiful villages, splendidly adorned country houses, smiling gardens, and museums —which all Europe might envy—made them indifferent to the work of self-defence. The nation thought it had no cause to fear for its security, forgetting that nations, like individuals, must fight if they wish to maintain their existence.

The military service, which had fallen into discredit, was left to mercenary troops; and if old men still existed who had witnessed the last battles valiantly fought to complete the enfranchisement of the Fatherland, the younger generations knew only by hearsay the exploits of their ancestors. 'Is it possible,' writes De Groot, sadly, 'that the nephews and descendants of those who laid the foundations of our liberty, are so lax in defending what their fathers so gloriously won? Yet only manly and generous resolutions can guarantee us against the violent designs with which we are threatened.' It was necessary that the republic should suffer all the ills of invasion and conquest, before the military spirit would awake once more, and revive tardily the traditions of patriotic resistance. It was only after experiencing a sudden collapse at the first encounter that the inhabitants of the United Provinces regained in some measure their self-possession, and found themselves in a position to repulse the aggression beneath the weight of which their enemies were preparing to overwhelm them.

While the storm that was gathering against the republic

abroad was overwhelming the Grand Pensionary of Holland with a dark cloud of present cares and anxiety for the future, John de Witt had withdrawn himself to the enjoyment of the short period of domestic happiness which remained for him. Surrounded by his children, with his old father and his eldest sister at his side, he found in the marks of attachment shown him by his wife's family a faint echo of his past happy life. After losing Wendela Bicker, who made, as he writes, 'the true half of himself,' he had summoned to him his sister-in-law, Cornelia Bicker, who had married the wealthy Gerard Bicker van Swieten, her first cousin, for whom he had obtained the appointments of Councillor of Domains and Grand Huntsman at the Hague. The qualities best suited for the management of a household gave her claims to his confidence, if we may judge from one of her letters. She writes from Dordrecht to excuse herself to her brother-in-law for being unable to visit him at the Hague, referring to her maternal duties, which did not permit her to leave her little girls, and to her obligations as mistress of the house, which she amuses herself with enumerating.

To obtain for his children the permanent care of their aunt, John de Witt left the abode in which he had passed his married life, and rented for himself and his sister-in-law two adjacent houses, whose gardens communicated with one another. They belonged to the family of his brother-in-law, Diederik Hoeuft, and before being divided had served as a sumptuous residence for the former Secretary of the States-General, Cornelius Muysch. They were situated in one of the most beautiful of the avenues of the Hague, the Kneuterdijk. John de Witt selected the house situated at the corner of this road and of the little street opening out of it, Duke Street, so named in remembrance of Duke Eric of Brunswick, who had inhabited the house in the sixteenth century. It is still preserved with the garden belonging to it, and having become now, by a singular change of destination, the palace of the son of the King of the Netherlands, to whom belongs the title of Prince of Orange,[1] perpetuates the memory of the tragical

[1] The last Prince of Orange died 1884.—Translator's Note.

end of him whose last abode it was to be. The Grand Pensionary established himself here three months after his wife's death, and one of his letters describes the troubles of changing house, 'of which all the fatigue and worry,' he adds, 'fall upon his sister-in-law.' A fortnight later, he had settled himself in his new home. 'We are now,' he writes, 'quite settled in our houses on the Kneuterdijk.' The library and the fine family portraits formed their chief ornaments.

Three years later John de Witt completed this family party. The assistance of his sister-in-law, Cornelia Bicker, who was obliged to give all her care to the infant to which she had lately given birth, was no longer sufficient for the Grand Pensionary. Moreover, the burden of public affairs, which weighed more heavily upon him day by day, left him no time to devote to the exigencies of domestic life. He found it necessary to relieve himself entirely from the cares of his household by making a joint establishment with his eldest sister Johanna, who lived far from him at Dordrecht, and whose watchful affection he had experienced since his youth. In the spring of the year 1672 she came to live with him with her husband, Jacob de Beveren, Lord of Zwyndrecht, former burgomaster of Dordrecht, who had just been appointed councillor-deputy of the States of Holland. The marriage of her two daughters permitted her to devote herself entirely to her brother. In the cruel trials which fortune had in store for John de Witt, she was to prove that she was the worthy sister of the Grand Pensionary, and that her mind was not less highly tempered than his.

Her old father, Jacob de Witt, who had always lived with her at Dordrecht, had followed her to the Hague. He had joyfully taken his place beside the hearth of the son in whom he gloried. De Witt's brother-in-law, Diederik Hœuft, husband of his second sister, Maria de Witt, writes to him from Rotterdam. 'We learnt with great pleasure from the husband of our sister, Madame de Zwyndrecht, that she, as well as your father, is going to reside with you in your house.' In spite of his eighty-two years, Jacob de Witt had not lost his interest in public affairs; he still continued to fulfil his duties

as President of the Court of Audit, which he only resigned after the death of his sons; and with alternate hopes and fears followed closely the course of events, in which his tenderest affections as well as his most immovable political convictions were bound up. As if to prepare himself for the blows of fate which were to assail him, he strengthened his courage by devout spiritual exercises; he was composing a volume of religious poems which appeared after his death under this title, 'The simple expression of my sentiments,' with a preface in these words: 'Christian, seek not here the poetry of the world, adorned by pomp of language; this is the pure fire of heaven. The author desired to sanctify his spirit by meditation. Enter into the same state of mind, and you will attain that end.' Jacob de Witt completed the last portion of the work by sentences which he wrote each day after supper, and he continued them for four months, till two days before his death, never allowing the grief of the father to get the mastery over the firm resignation of the believer.

The residence of John de Witt had become the family meeting-place. He constantly repeats in his letters his invitations to his last surviving uncle, Andrew de Graeff, to his brother Cornelius and his wife, and to his sisters-in-law, married, one to Jacob Trip, the other to Peter de Graeff, Lord of Zuydpolsbroeck and Ilpendam. 'The pleasure which your agreeable presence gave here to the whole family in general, and to myself in particular,' he writes to his young cousin, Alida de Graeff, 'constrains me to thank you, and to beg you not to deprive us too long of this same pleasure; but, according to the promise made by your father the Burgomaster, my worthy uncle, and by yourself when you took leave, to do us the honour to visit us again shortly, next winter at the latest.'

De Witt kept up his intercourse with his relations by means of frequent correspondence. Sometimes he touches on private affairs of the most familiar or the most secret nature; sometimes he expresses himself confidentially on public matters. He finds time to send arithmetical problems to his young cousin, Alida de Graeff, for whom he showed great affection. 'I hope to enjoy again,' he writes to her, 'the

satisfaction of observing and admiring the great progress which you have made in a short time in the science of figures, and I shall do so with particular contentment and pleasure if I can contribute to it again in any measure, for which I will make every effort in my power.'

Always ready to give advice, he interests himself in the cares of his sister, who, on the eve of marrying her second daughter, was anxious to inculcate industrious habits on her future son-in-law, Nicholas Van den Dussen. 'When a person is perfectly independent, and takes no pleasure either in reading or in any personal occupation,' she writes to her brother, 'he must seek for society, and when that is done to pass the time, it leads to dissipation, which is a sad thing for his wife and all his family.' In order that the young man should not remain idle, De Witt drew up for him a rule of life.

While the Grand Pensionary took such interest in all family matters, he reserved his greatest care for the education of his three daughters and his two sons. The task appeared to him a pleasant though a weighty one, but he was not at liberty to devote all his attention to it. His two sons, John and Jacob, of whom one was eight years old and the other still in his cradle when he lost his wife, appeared to him too young to be sent away from home, and he kept them with him under the charge of his sister-in-law, Cornelia Bicker van Swieten. For his daughters he accepted gladly the hospitality offered them by their mother's family. One of their aunts, who had married Peter de Graeff, had taken them back to Bois-le-Duc after their mother's death, to the doctor whose care was still essential to them; and De Witt had accompanied them for the first half of their journey. The day after their arrival, his eldest daughter, Anna, writes to him: 'My dear Papa,—After we left you we continued our journey, and M. Fey told us we were nearly well. We hope to leave at the end of next week.' On their return from Bois-le-Duc he left his second daughter, Agneta, with his sister-in-law, who begged to keep her till the Christmas holidays, in order that he might take advantage of them to come and fetch her. He sent her niece

back to her every year, while the youngest of the three sisters, Maria, remained under the care of her other aunt, who had married John Deutz, and who also resided in Amsterdam. To pay their expenses their father sent their uncle, Peter de Graeff, the sum of 600 florins. As for his daughter Anna, De Witt sent her by preference to his sister, Johanna de Zwyndrecht, and before the latter left Dordrecht to reside with her brother at the Hague, she invited her niece so often, that De Witt wished to defray the expense of these frequent visits. His two other daughters having in their turn gone to spend some time with their aunt, De Witt composes for them a letter in which Agneta thanks her for her kind reception of them, as well as for the good advice she had given them.

De Witt was glad that his daughters should seek some amusement away from their father's house, which his widowerhood and his occupations made sad and solitary; three years after his wife's death, in the beginning of the year 1672, he had not yet left off his mourning attire, and had caused his children to retain it also up to that time. He did not, however, wish to inflict his grief on them, and would not prevent his daughters from taking part in the pleasures of their age. They wrote him faithful accounts of these with naïve joy. Anna informs him of the invitations and visits which she has received on the occasion of the Christmas festivities; she sends him news of the old lady who had brought him up, Mademoiselle van den Linden, and describes to him her skating parties on the canal of Dordrecht and her drives on the ice in a sleigh driven by her cousin, the son of Cornelius de Witt. Another year she writes to him: 'We made up a family party to eat pancakes, and we all drank your health twice over.' Agneta was no less happy with her aunt De Graeff, whose daughters did everything to amuse her, both at Amsterdam and at their country house of Ilpendam, near Utrecht. She entreats her father for leave to prolong her absence. The following year, when she returns to her aunt Deutz, in order to receive the care required by her state of health, she is taken to the fair, where she amuses herself with various games, and she informs her father that her cure will necessitate a prolonged

absence. She does not appear displeased at this; but at the same time, with a sudden return of filial tenderness, she begs for his society, 'without which all pleasure appears to her dull, and in the expectation of his speedy visit, which she reminds him that he has promised her, she very humbly kisses his hand.'

From afar as well as near, John de Witt's superintendence never failed his daughters. During their absence, he required them to correspond with him twice a week. His eldest daughter having let a week pass without writing to him, the great statesman, whom the cares of the public business did not make less tender as a father, reproaches her gently, 'being unable to comprehend what were the manifold and urgent affairs which could have prevented her finding one short hour to write him a few lines.' In another letter he congratulates her on her progress in writing and arithmetic, on the knowledge she is acquiring of the Old and New Testaments, as well as on her good and instructive readings in history, French and German, advising her to avail herself, during her stay at Dordrecht, of the wise counsels of her aunt. His second daughter, Agneta, does not fail, on her part, to inform her father 'that she practises writing, dancing, and the guitar and violin, assuring him that she will employ her time well, in order to be better able to please him.' The education of his eldest son, who was still a child, was the constant object of his thoughts. Having sent him to his aunt De Zwyndrecht to spend a few days with his sister Anna, he begs the latter to superintend regularly her brother's early studies.

As his eldest daughter grew up, he found it more difficult to resign himself to keeping her at a distance from him, being unable, as he writes to her, 'to dispense with such sweet companionship,' and when the separation is prolonged he begs her 'to take advantage of the first opportunity to return.' She had just entered her seventeenth year when a wealthy marriage was proposed for her. The Grand Pensionary objected to it, and in a long letter written to his brother-in-law Deutz, he makes known to him the reasons why he cannot consent to it. Although the name of him who was proposing for the young

girl has not transpired, it is not without interest to learn what were the reasons with which De Witt supported his refusal. He begins by stating that he has consulted the members of his family, without telling them his own sentiments, from the fear that they might too readily make their opinion coincide with his own. Fortified by their approval, he continues in these terms: 'This person has hitherto applied himself to nothing, and hence he must be looked upon as one of those idlers for whom I have always had a great antipathy, having learnt by many examples that people of that sort, once married, and not knowing how to employ their leisure hours, give themselves up to bad company, and consequently to a disorderly life. Moreover, I have always considered the chief happiness in this world to consist in an indissoluble union contracted with a person of an agreeable and conciliatory temper, all the riches of the universe being unable, in my opinion, to make up for the pain which an incompatible temper gives to all who suffer from it. I do not yet know absolutely what sort of disposition may be found in this person; but I have learnt this lesson from my ancestors, that in the case of a marriage we should not make alliances with the children of parents whose characters are not pleasing. I myself knew the father very well, and the mother in some degree, and I consider their dispositions to be such that should the son resemble the better one of the two, I had rather carry my children to church in order to see them laid in the grave, than allow them to contract a marriage with anyone from whom nothing better can be expected. What I have hitherto observed in his behaviour has not served to relieve me of the apprehension that he may in fact too closely resemble his parents, and, in consequence, I consider that it is my absolute duty to refuse him my consent to his entering my family.' John de Witt had tasted the sweetness of conjugal life, and he wished that marriage should confer on his daughter the same happy existence that he had himself enjoyed.

It would have been a touching scene of home life for an artist, this picture of the five children grouped about their illustrious father, as if to console him in his days of misfortune

and trials, gathered round the venerable grandfather who sees his powerful race revived in them, while beside them is the devoted aunt who is their second mother. It would seem as if enmities and hatred ought to die out on the threshold of the peaceful home on which a thunderbolt is soon to fall.

We see the three young girls who afterwards became the wives, Anna, of Herman van den Honert, burgomaster of Dordrecht; Maria, of William Hooft, burgomaster of Delft; and Agneta, of Simon van Teresteyn d'Halewyn, who was also burgomaster of Dordrecht, was compromised twenty years later in the peace negotiations with France, and shut up by order of William III. as a State prisoner at Loewestein, where he found reminiscences of the captivity of his grandfather, Jacob de Witt, and whence he succeeded in escaping, and, after the death of his wife, took refuge in Surinam. According to the family portraits, Agneta was pale and dull-eyed; her delicate constitution required the greatest care. Maria, whose countenance reflects the gentleness of her disposition, appears to have been as weakly as her sister. Anna had more grace than beauty; she delighted in her father's instructions, and her liking for the pleasures of youth did not prevent her having a taste for serious studies. In one of John de Witt's letters to her, he himself represents her with her spinning wheel beside her, reading the little Bible in big print with gilt copper clasps, which she asked for and received as a gift from her father.

Of the two sons, the younger, Jacob, who died unmarried at an early age, was still almost an infant at this time; the elder, John, aged ten, 'naughty enough sometimes to blot his sisters' letters,' a noisy and boisterous child though often ailing, showed great aptitude for work when he chose to apply himself. He married his first cousin, Wilhelmina, daughter of his uncle, Cornelius de Witt, and through him has been perpetuated to the present day the direct posterity of the Grand Pensionary. He acquired by his studies and by his travels in Flanders and Italy a remarkable degree of erudition, which enabled him to enrich his library with numerous and well-chosen books, the catalogue of which, edited by the learned

Brævius, was published under the name of 'Bibliotheca Wittiana.' His merit did honour to his birth. A contemporary describes him 'as one of those rare men whom strangers note down on their tablets, and go to visit as one of the curiosities in a town.' He devoted himself to the worship of his father's memory, and employed himself with tender solicitude, as his correspondence testifies, in making a collection of all the documents relating to the death of the Grand Pensionary. In spite of the advances which the Prince of Orange appears to have made to him, he did not seek his good graces, but contented himself with filling the post of Secretary of the town of Dordrecht, which was conferred on him in his early youth. He died at the age of thirty-nine, without having ever had the desire or the opportunity of taking part in public affairs.

Such were the five children destined soon to be orphans. At the age of scarcely forty-seven, their father was approaching the end of a life in which, during his later years, no bitterness or anguish was spared him.

His brother, Cornelius de Witt, who had given himself up with the same indefatigable devotion to the service of his country, was enjoying, without any drawback, the happiness of domestic life. Magistrate of the town of Dordrecht, and Curator of the University of Leyden in succession to his father, he was also *Ruard* or Governor of the district of Putten in South Holland, where he exercised both administrative and judicial functions: on the one hand, in his capacity as Superintendent of Bridges and Roads (*Oppendykraaf*) and President of the Board of Inspectors of Dykes (*Heemsraden*); on the other, as Criminal Bailiff as well as Chief Civil Judge. Before being sent for the second time to the fleet as plenipotentiary of the States-General, he had petitioned that the succession to his office as *Ruard* of Putten should be conferred on his son. The Grand Pensionary had scrupulously refrained from supporting this request, 'considering that it would be preferable that some notable member of the Assembly should make the proposal of his own free motion.' The initiative was taken by the deputies of Amsterdam, and the States of Holland received the demand favourably. The

councillors and the presidents of the Courts of Audit and of Domains of the Province confirmed this resolution, declaring that, in consequence of the great services of his father, and setting aside the decisions which prohibited any transmission of offices, the succession to the functions exercised by Cornelius de Witt should be continued to his son.

His brother's glory had not overshadowed his own, but had, on the contrary, given greater lustre to its splendour. The expedition of Chatham, which he had led in conjunction with Ruyter, and which so brilliantly ended the second war with England by one bold stroke, had won for him tokens of public gratitude. Perhaps he had not been sufficiently reticent in expressing the natural satisfaction his success must have caused him. John de Witt seems to reproach him gently for being disposed to think too much of himself, and suggests to him to speak less in the first person in his official correspondence. 'You say,' he writes, '"*I* raised the anchor, and *I* set sail." I believe I myself have always, and more especially in similar circumstances, spoken in the plural, being careful to say *we* thought it right, in order to imply thus the approbation of the lieutenant-admiral or of the Council of War, which will doubtless always be considered more modest.'

The haughty temper of Cornelius de Witt needed the softening effect of his brother's prudent advice. After his appointment as plenipotentiary of the States on board the fleet, he had objected to any other deputies being selected, not choosing to consent to a division of authority. 'In the event of the States-General nominating as commissioners deputies with whom I have had no relations and might be in danger of not agreeing,' he writes to his brother, 'I had rather leave the fleet.' The Grand Pensionary, more conciliatory, blames him for showing such a touchy disposition, and informs him that he had not thought right to make known to the States his too hasty resolution. He begs him 'to avoid committing himself, and, in order better to serve the public good, to consent, at all events, to the appointment of deputies whom he could have no cause to suspect.'

Cornelius de Witt may indeed have given way to some feelings of pride, but the high opinion he had of himself appeared to him justified by the constant services he had rendered his country, for which he had always been ready to brave every danger and unhesitatingly to sacrifice his life. His countenance appears to have been the mirror of his soul; the proud and somewhat haughty expression was accentuated by the lengthened oval of his face, and the narrow forehead and compressed lips gave evidence of the determined energy of his character.

The relations of Cornelius de Witt with his brother had continued to be of the closest nature. During the time that he was charged with the diplomatic negotiations at Brussels, he had kept up a correspondence with him which was continued after his departure for the fleet. Throughout the entire naval operations, their letters, which have been happily preserved, enable us to follow, almost day by day, the course of events, while they complete by irrefutable testimony the proofs of their brotherly affection.

Cornelius de Witt, more fortunate than the Grand Pensionary, had preserved the faithful companion of his home life, who was closely associated with the vicissitudes of his political career. Maria van Berkel possessed his entire confidence, and had continued to be to him, during twenty-two years of married life, 'his entirely well-beloved,' as he calls her at the head of each of his letters. Keenly anxious for her husband's greatness as well as for that of her brother-in-law, who showed the greatest regard for her, she had often been the confidant and adviser of both. Cornelius de Witt made no important decision without consulting her, and acted in accordance with the advice she gave him. When the Grand Pensionary proposed to him, during the second war with England, that he should represent the States-General on board the fleet which was to attack the English ships in the Thames, he only accepted the offer after communicating it to his wife, being careful to impress upon her 'that it would not be advisable for him to decline the post.' He need not have feared that she would deter him from it. Inaccessible to weakness, Maria

van Berkel proved herself worthy, by her intrepid courage, of sharing the cruel trials destined for her husband.

To his happiness as a husband Cornelius de Witt added that of a father. He had, like John de Witt, five young children, of whom the two eldest were boys, and the others girls of tender age. The eldest, Anna, who was at this time only five years of age, married at fifteen Simon Muys van Holy, burgomaster of Dordrecht; the second, Maria, died unmarried; and the third, Wilhelmina, who was just born at this time, united later the two families by her marriage with her first cousin, the son of John de Witt, but did not live long enough to enjoy many years of her happy fate. The two sons of Cornelius de Witt, Jacob and John, the first a young man of nineteen and the other a boy of twelve when they lost their father, did not survive him long; they both died early, the younger at the age of twenty-one, his brother at twenty-two during the course of his travels. A week after the terrible tragedy which deprived him of his father, the elder of the two sons left his country, 'being unable to live any longer in that odious place,' as is stated in his mother's family record. He proceeded to Brabant and thence to Strasburg, afterwards took his degree at the University of Padua, was warmly welcomed at the court of Savoy, and died at Venice of small-pox. According to a contemporary narrative, he had foreshadowed unconsciously the misfortunes of his family and the ruin of his house in a representation of Seneca's tragedy, 'The Troiad,' which had been acted by the pupils of the Latin school at Dordrecht before the magistrates and the principal inhabitants of the town. He performed the part of Astyanax falling from the top of a tower into the burning ashes of Troy. 'Who would have thought,' observes this eye-witness, 'that this representation would be a presage of what was soon to come to pass? This family, so powerful from its great authority, has become a lamentable example of the scourge of revolutions!'

The two brothers, who had been so closely united in life, and associated in turns in the same greatness and the same misfortunes, were destined by fate to share the same death.

'The two De Witts, successively loved and hated, raised up and thrown down together:' such is the touching and faithful inscription traced by a contemporary beneath their family portraits, which deserves to be recorded by history. Both were to be struck down by the blows that appeared as if destined to destroy the republic, and to which they were to succumb.

CHAPTER XII.

INVASION AND RESISTANCE.

Military preparations of Louis XIV.—The French army and its leaders—Las audience of De Groot—Declaration of war—Acts of hostility on the part of the King of England—Attack on the India fleet—Aggression of the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne—Offensive measures advised by De Witt—Attempted attack on Neuss in the Electorate of Cologne—Its failure—Plan of a naval expedition to the coast of France—Attempts against English fleet—Cornelius de Witt sent as plenipotentiary of the States to Ruyter—Correspondence of the two brothers—The States-General obliged to remain on the defensive—A league for the defence of Utrecht vainly demanded by De Witt—Insufficiency of equipments and levies of troops—Reinforcements sent to the camp by the Grand Pensionary—The invasion—March of the French army—Attack and seizure of the fortresses of the Rhine—The line of the Yssel guarded by the Prince of Orange—Louis XIV. moves upon the Rhine, which is insufficiently defended—Orders and counter-orders given to Montbas—Passage of the Rhine by the French army—The Prince of Orange forced to retreat—Fatal dispersion of the army—Useless counsels of the Grand Pensionary—The Prince of Orange brings back a small part of the troops into Holland—Positions occupied by the detachments of his division—Naval battle of Solebay—Ruyter and Cornelius de Witt—Cornelius de Witt obliged to quit the fleet—The United Provinces secured from a naval invasion—Operations of the Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster—They take possession of Overyssel—Continuation of the French King's conquests—Mistakes made by Louis XIV.—Expedition of the Marquis de Rochefort—Muyden saved—Louis XIV. awaits offers of submission at Utrecht—Distress of the United Provinces—Inundations—First steps taken by Amsterdam—Defensive measures resolved on by the States of Holland and advised by De Witt—His speech—Zealand repulses the invasion—Resistance of Ardenburg—Obstacles opposed to the French conquest—Opinion pronounced by Louis XIV.—Alliances—Diplomatic relations of the States-General with Denmark, Switzerland, and Spain—Treaty between the Emperor and the Elector of Brandenburg for the protection of the Germanic territory—Military assistance promised to the United Provinces—Necessity for gaining time—Policy of the Grand Pensionary—Negotiations between Charles II. and Louis XIV.—First overtures of peace made by De Groot—His return to the Hague—Deliberations of the States of Holland and the States-General—Full powers voted to De Groot—He returns to the French camp—Amsterdam pronounces in favour of resistance—The republic may be saved by peace or war—Services rendered by De Witt.

THE offensive alliance of the two great monarchies of Europe, France and England, made an invasion of the United Provinces

imminent. It seemed to place at their mercy a republic cut off from all alliances, and which had long remained disarmed. To complete her destruction, Louis XIV. had employed all the arts of diplomacy, wielded by the skilful hands of such a minister as Lionne. His finances, moreover, were in a condition to provide for all expenses, and Colbert promised him for the campaign on which he was setting out, 50,000,000 livres instead of the 35,000,000 which he asked for. The most formidable means of attack were at the same time furnished him by Louvois. He had at his disposal a numerous body of troops whose efficiency and discipline left nothing to be desired.

De Groot had given constant warning of the French preparations for war in his correspondence with the Grand Pensionary and with Fagel, Secretary of the States-General. As early as the beginning of the year 1671, he writes from Paris: 'Commissions have been given here for raising a hundred and twenty fresh companies of cavalry. Numerous levies are being made in Italy and Switzerland. Forty new commissions have been sent out for the cavalry, and a hundred for the infantry,' he added at the end of the year; 'all French officers serving abroad have been recalled, shoes are being roughed for ice, and a number of small bridges of rushes and reeds constructed for crossing rivers.' When, later on, war became inevitable, De Groot gave precise information as to the preparations for commencing the campaign. 'Four hundred fresh commissions,' he writes, 'have been sent for establishing a camp in the Spanish Netherlands, and troops are being sent into Catalonia, in order, if necessary, to annoy Spain. A hundred fresh commissions have been prepared for enlisting 5,000 horse; 27,000 are already mounted, and 40,000 are reckoned upon. The divisions got together for the campaign at Metz during the winter are to have their principal rendezvous at Rocroy.'

The naval preparations had been completed with equal promptitude. Louis XIV. was not satisfied with reinforcing his fleet by the equipment of fresh ships, but employed himself at the same time in the defence of the coasts of France,

by causing five arsenals to be constructed, at Brest, Rochefort, Toulon, Dunkirk, and Havre. For the last four years, Colbert had placed at his disposal a whole nation of sailors, by subjecting the inhabitants of the ports to a class regulation, that is to say to a naval conscription, which produced 35,000 men for manning the ships of war. The young nobles, who had hitherto neglected the naval service, were beginning to join it. The fleet, which in 1667 only comprised 60 vessels, now numbered 200, of which 120 were ships of war, armed with 5,000 guns.

The army had been increased by fresh levies to 176,000 men, and an exact list of the number of troops destined for service in the field was presented to Louis XIV. by Louvois. There were first the picked troops, comprising not only the regiment of French Guards, commanded by François d'Aubusson, Duke de la Feuillade, and the regiment of Swiss Guards, each reckoned at 5,000 foot, but also the King's household troops composed of various companies, viz. body-guards, gendarmes of the guard, light horse, musketeers, and royal gendarmerie, representing 2,900 horse, commanded by the most illustrious representatives of the French nobility—Duras, Prince de Soubise, the Marquis de Rochefort, and Louvigny, brother of the Count de Guiche and second son of Marshal Grammont. Next to these came the regiments of the line : forty regiments of French infantry, making a complement of 56,000 men, and twelve regiments of foreign infantry, amounting to 30,000 men; seventy-eight regiments of French cavalry, of which two were dragoons, and nine regiments of foreign cavalry, amounting to over 25,000 horse. Then came the field artillery and the regiment of fusiliers with the siege train, comprising 97 guns, 72,000 cannon balls, 600 bombs, and 15,000 grenades, to which were added three pontoon trains as well as two floating redoubts which could easily transport 3,000 men. With regard to the commissariat service, to which Louvois had always given his closest attention, and which demanded the carriage of no less than 258,900 rations, it was organised in such a manner as to provide for all the wants of the troops. With such an army, which might be reckoned at 110,000 or 120,000

men, Louis XIV. 'possessed an escort which would allow him to take a quiet little journey in Holland.' It is thus he announces to Vauban the speedy opening of the campaign. The military renown of the King's principal lieutenants, Condé, Turenne, Luxemburg, and Vauban, was a sure presage of victory.

Louis de Bourbon, Prince of Condé, the hero of Lens, Nordlingen, Friburg, and Rocroy, whom the last intrigues of the Fronde had made a traitor to France, had been, as it were, reconquered from Spain by the peace of the Pyrenees. His glory had illumined the early years of the reign of Louis XIV. with so bright a lustre that even his desertion could not overshadow it. Impatient to condone his errors by means of fresh exploits, he appeared destined to snatch victory once more by his unerring glance, as well as by the boldness of his manœuvres.

Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne belonged, like Condé, to a princely race, and was proudly satisfied with styling himself Viscount Turenne, without assuming the title of Marshal, which had been conferred on him in the year 1660, in recompense for his loyalty and for the services rendered by him as conqueror of the Fronde. His military renown was such, that Louis himself apologises 'for very audaciously giving him orders.' Possessed of the faculty of foreseeing and reckoning upon every possible event, he had no rival amongst the military men of his age in the tactics of scientific war. His natural prudence had acquired boldness from the habit of success, and the rapidity of his conquests was only equalled by the vigilance with which he maintained them.

Beside Condé and Turenne, François Henri de Montmorency Bouteville, who had become by his marriage Duke of Luxemburg, appeared as the inheritor of their military glory. Born after the death of his father, who had lost his life in a duel, he had found in Condé a protector in whose school he acquired all those qualities which combine to make a great general. 'Nothing,' writes Saint-Simon, 'could be more brilliant, more wary, or more far-seeing, than he before the enemy, or in the day of battle, with an audacity and self-

possession which enabled him to see and to foresee everything in the midst of the hottest fire and the most imminent danger.' But dark clouds overshadowed the splendour of his budding glory. Corrupt and absolutely unscrupulous, inhuman and vaunting his inhumanity, he was of those who, with the commissary Robert, his worthy rival in pitiless severity, were about to arouse against France in the United Provinces the same hatred which Spain had incurred during the War of Independence.

The very opposite to Luxemburg, Sébastien Leprêtre de Vauban had merited from Saint-Simon the appellation of 'the most honest and virtuous man of his age.' He justified this praise by an elevation of character which enhanced the merit of his rare talents, by rigid honesty, and by his anxiety for the soldiers' lives, of which 'he was a miserly economiser.' Justly appreciated by Louis XIV., who took him under his protection in his early career and raised him to the rank of lieutenant-general, and subsequently to that of Marshal of France, he had rapidly acquired the reputation of being highly skilled in the art of siege and fortification, and had made himself known as an inventor of great genius. The superiority of his plans, which he was as competent to carry out as to conceive, allowed everything to be hoped for the service of France from the enterprises confided to him. He completed the glorious phalanx of soldiers whom Louis XIV. had the good fortune to have at his disposal, and who were to render irresistible the shock of his forces.

Full of confidence in the success of the campaign for which he had prepared himself with exemplary care, the King of France had rejected all overtures of peace, though without any desire to precipitate the war, as he wished to avail himself of the most favourable time of year. Having now no further interest in delaying the carrying out of his determination, and wishing to facilitate his rupture with the United Provinces, he was desirous of hastening the departure of their ambassador. As soon, therefore, as the first winter months were over, although determined not to depart from diplomatic courtesies, he impressed upon De Groot, who was

detained in France by ill health, the necessity for putting an end to his stay, and commissioned Pomponne to hold a last conference with the ambassador of the republic. Pomponne professed in this interview that he was ignorant of the King's schemes, and contented himself with repeating his usual recriminations against the States-General; but when De Groot asked him jestingly if it was looked upon as a crime for them to seek to defend themselves, he could not refrain from smiling. De Groot seized the opportunity to try to ascertain whether he advised him to leave the country. 'Pomponne refused to answer, and protested that the King would never give him the order to depart; but he acknowledged, nevertheless, that the ambassador of the republic ought not to remain any longer in a country where war was imminent, nor expose himself to the risk of falling out with those who might speak ill of his masters.' De Groot, in transmitting this communication to the States-General, obtained their authorisation not to delay his return any longer, and as soon as his sufferings enabled him to proceed on his journey, he hastened to obtain his farewell audience.

He repaired to Versailles on the morning of the 23rd of March, 1672, in great ceremony, and was introduced into the King's chamber. It was so crowded that there was difficulty in moving about; the most important personages in the kingdom had met together to receive the ambassador of the States. Louis XIV., seeing him walk with difficulty on the polished floors of the palace, said to him, according to a tradition preserved in the family of Peter de Groot, 'Take care, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, the path is slippery.' The speech made by De Groot to the King was as remarkable for its moderation as for the dignity of its language; he avoided all recrimination, and, without alluding to a rupture which was now inevitable, he persistently invoked the alliance between the two countries which the King of France was at that moment sacrificing to his passions. Louis XIV. answered him kindly that he would prefer not to converse with him upon the subject of the States-General, but that he retained a particular esteem for himself personally, of which he would give him proofs on all

occasions. While De Groot was waiting for an audience with the Queen, Louis caused the fountains of Versailles to be played for him, and continued to show him the most particular marks of attention.

De Groot set out without loss of time, and was treated during his journey with all the honours due to an ambassador. Before leaving France he could not resist predicting to the Chancellor Letellier the change of fortune to which Louis XIV. was exposing himself by so unjust a war. 'I gave him to understand before I left,' he writes later, 'that he must not suppose that the King had as many friends as people told him, that no doubt his power caused him to be feared, but that if ever a party could be formed powerful enough to oppose him, it would be seen to which side the balance inclined, and what satisfaction would be felt at the possibility of weakening a power which was already too formidable for the rest of Europe.'

As soon as the Dutch ambassador had crossed the frontier, the King of France issued his manifesto solemnly declaring war against them, on April 6, 1672. Pomponne gave preliminary notice to the Dutch Secretary of Embassy, Rompf, who, having married in Paris, where he practised as a doctor, had been authorised to remain in France, and he commissioned him to communicate it to his masters. A strict observer of diplomatic customs, the King paid no heed 'to the advice of some of his courtiers, who thought he did too much honour to a government composed of shopkeepers and cheesemongers.' Yielding more than ever to his natural presumption, Louis XIV. celebrated beforehand the conquest he was about to undertake. He caused a medal to be struck representing the sun dispersing by its beams the vapours issuing from a morass, with this inscription, alluding to the protection accorded by France to the rising republic: *Evexi, sed discutiam*—'I raised them from the ground, but I will scatter them.'

This confidence was not shared by everyone, as we perceive from a curious memorandum of Condé's, and from the letters of Madame de Sévigné. Condé, having been consulted by

Louvois on the subject of the war with Holland, and requested 'to send an answer by return messenger,' writes to him in these terms: 'Sir, I learn from your letter the honour that the King of France does me, in wishing to have my opinion on the prospect held out to him, as it is set forth in detail by the report which you have sent me. Although it is not altogether agreeable to me to offer my opinion on a matter of such great importance, I have thought myself bound to obey the orders you have transmitted to me on the part of his Majesty. I have drawn up a short memorandum which I send you. I beg you will apologise for me to the King for the errors he will find in it, and do me the favour to believe that I am, sir, yours very affectionately at your service, Louis de Bourbon.'

In the memorandum here referred to, Condé does not hesitate to declare that he would have thought it preferable to transfer the seat of war to the Netherlands, at the risk of directly provoking the powers who were protecting Spain and whose interference appeared to him of little consequence. On the other hand, a war against the United Provinces, sheltered behind the Netherlands, seems to him full of danger. 'Their country is a very difficult one in itself,' he writes: 'the fortresses are strong, and most of them are situated on the sea, amidst marshes, or on immense rivers. The positions where they can be attacked so that a mortal blow may be struck them, are very distant from this kingdom.' Condé saw reason to fear also the alliances which they would inevitably secure, the advantages the States-General would derive from the assistance of Spain, the danger of diplomatic defections, and the exhaustion of provisions and ammunition, and without going so far as to predict the obstacles that might be placed in the way of conquest by inundations, he pointed out 'the disagreeable necessity to which the King might be reduced,' thus showing Louis XIV. in the distance the rock on which the enterprise might be wrecked.

'The Prince is much taken up with this important matter,' writes Madame de Sévigné; 'the other day a sort of madman came to him and told him that he knew how to coin money.

"My friend," he said, "I thank you, but if you know an invention by which we can cross the Yssel without being cut to pieces, you will do me a great kindness, for I know of none." ' 'We are going to have a severe war,' she writes again, on hearing of her son's departure for the army, 'and I am in mortal terror. It is the most perilous campaign that has ever been heard of since the passage of Charles VIII. into Italy; the King was told so. The Yssel,' she adds, 'is lined and defended by 200 guns, 60,000 foot soldiers, three large towns, and another wide river before you come to it. Count de Guiche, who knows the country, showed us the map the other day: it is astonishing. . . . There will be 100,000 men withdrawn from Paris. For the last four days I have done nothing but take leave. Everyone weeps for a son, a brother, a husband, or a lover, one must be a wretched creature not to feel interested in the departure of the whole of France; this is a strange war which begins very sadly.' The first successes were soon to put an end to these fears, and only to leave room for the enthusiasm of victory.

It was not only against France, but against England also, that the States-General had to defend themselves. While Louis XIV., jealous of giving an appearance of greatness even to the excesses of his policy, was declaring war against the States-General in kingly style, Charles II. was commencing it by an act of treachery wholly inconsistent with the dignity of majesty. After concealing for a long period his projects for a rupture, the King of England was in haste to carry them out, in order to secure for himself the continuance of French subsidies. The seizure of several Dutch vessels which had been brought into English ports was the prelude to hostilities, and Charles II. announced his intention of not giving them up so long as his differences with the republic were not settled. Instead of giving the satisfaction demanded by the Dutch ambassador, Meerman, he announced to him his resolution to consider the Dutch fleets everywhere as lawful capture! Two days later this scandalous threat was carried out.

Having had information that a fleet of seventy vessels escorted by six ships of war was returning from Smyrna,

bringing to the United Provinces a rich cargo valued at 750,000 florins, Charles II. determined to take possession of it. He selected for this work of plunder Sir Robert Holmes, who, at the commencement of the last war against the republic, had distinguished himself by an enterprise of the same nature on the coasts of Guinea. Holmes received orders to assume command of the ships he would find at Portsmouth as well as those which he might meet with at sea, and set out with twelve frigates. He passed the English squadron, commanded by Sir Edward Spragg, which in concert with that of the States-General had recently destroyed the navy of the Algerian pirates in the Mediterranean. Not wishing to share with anyone the spoils of his coveted prize, Holmes allowed him to sail away without informing him of the instructions he had received. The following day he came in sight of the convoy near the Isle of Wight. But the commander of the Dutch flotilla had been informed of the danger; small boats had been sent to them with all haste by the ambassador of the republic, who was alarmed at the declaration made to him by the King of England, and they had thus secured themselves from surprise.

Holmes opened proceedings by firing a shot at the ship of Captain Adrian de Haas, who commanded the convoy, so that he might be forced, if he did not dip his ensign, to come on board the English commander's ship; while the second in command, Lord Ossory, was trying to lead Captain du Boys, who commanded the van, into the same trap. The latter, suspecting the artifice, would not leave his ship, while Captain de Haas, equally suspicious, ordered his lieutenant to go and ask for explanations from the English commander. The lieutenant had scarcely set foot on the deck, when he perceived the preparations for attack. He hastened to direct the sailors whom he had left in the boat to go back and warn the captain. The sailors, cutting the rope that fastened their boat to the English ship, bent to their oars, and in spite of a volley of musketry succeeded in getting away. Holmes immediately commenced the fight by attacking with his vessel, armed with thirty guns, the ship commanded by De Haas, whose artillery

was greatly inferior. In spite of this inequality, the latter repulsed his assailant and defended himself throughout the day with equal success against another English vessel, but was killed while valiantly doing his duty. In order to conceal his death, Captain du Boys, whose duty it was to take over the command, ordered the lieutenant to keep the flag flying, and the enemy was obliged to retreat with the loss of a ship.

On the next day but one the English squadron, strengthened by a reinforcement of five frigates, renewed the action at nine o'clock in the morning. The Dutch ships repulsed this second attack with equal success; but during a third, which took place the same evening, while Captain du Boys sustained the shock and lost his hand in the fight, Captain van Nès' ship was forced to surrender after the death of her commander, and sank, riddled with shot. Holmes took advantage of the disorder for which this loss was the signal, to penetrate into the centre of the convoy; but he could only capture three ships, and the fleet, assisted by a favourable wind as well as by the darkness of the night, got away from him. The attempt had thus been unsuccessful, and public opinion was loudly expressed against the ignominy of such an enterprise, which cast upon the nation the disgrace of their King's perfidy. Even the French court disapproved of this violation of the law of nations. When the news reached Louis XIV.'s minister at one of the principal German courts, he declared publicly that when the King, his master, made war on the States-General, he would not do so like a pirate.

Charles II. had 'thrown aside his mask,' as John de Witt writes to his brother, and did not hesitate to acknowledge that he had himself given the order to commence hostilities by this shameful surprise. On the very day when the news of the attack on the fleet of the United Provinces was spread in London, his commissioners were directed to inform the ambassadors of the republic, Meerman and Boreel, that the King of England had determined to break openly with the States-General. At the same time one of the Duke of York's gentlemen went to the secretary of embassy, and warned him that Meerman would receive orders to leave the country in the

same ship that had brought him there. The declaration of war, dated the following day, was published the next day but one, March 27, 1672, at noon. Three days later Meerman received his farewell audience and departed, leaving in England the ordinary ambassador Boreel, who received permission to remain there for the present. 'There is nothing more for us to do,' he writes to De Witt, 'except to defend ourselves vigorously, and even to take the offensive in order to surprise the English by some sudden attack or by an unexpected invasion.'

With a view to impose upon public opinion at home and abroad, Charles II. thought fit to issue a manifesto in which he renewed accusations as vague as they were frivolous against the States-General, reproaching them with having sought every opportunity to annoy and injure him. The States did not think it consistent with their dignity to respond either to his passionate language or to his violent conduct, and offered no refutation to the King's accusations. While not choosing to publish the vindication which one of the members of the States of Holland had been commissioned to draw up, they left to Wicquefort—'who has since been seen,' as he himself writes, 'occupying a post worthy of his merits'—the care of answering the King of England's calumnies in a work entitled, 'Reflections on the present State of the United Provinces,' which refuted all the false pretexts put forward for a rupture.

At the same time, the States-General made it a point of honour to contrast with this brutal aggression made against them in time of peace their own scrupulous respect for the treaties which the King of England had violated in so audacious a manner. In retaliation for the seizure of some of their ships by Charles II. and for the treachery by which three vessels had been violently taken from their merchant fleet, they had at first placed an embargo on all English trading ships in their ports. Notwithstanding the advice of Meerman, who did not wish the bad faith of the English Government to go unpunished, the States of Holland represented to the States-General that, by the terms of the treaty of Breda, the subjects of the republic and those of England were to have,

in the event of a rupture, six clear months for the purpose of removing their merchandise. They proudly declared that though Charles II. had violated this clause the republic could not permit itself to infringe it. They demanded, therefore, that the English ships should have liberty to withdraw. The States-General approved this proposal by a resolution of May 14, 1672; thus by their own honesty making their enemy's knavery the more apparent and odious. The King of England himself felt humiliated, and gave up the ships which he had seized, refusing, however, to return those which had been captured from the Smyrna fleet. 'He considered them,' he declared, 'as lawful capture, on account of his settled intention of declaring war when he caused them to be attacked; that intention being equivalent to a formal announcement.' The justice of his cause might be gauged by such an argument.

Besides having to maintain war with France and England, the United Provinces had to repel the attacks of other enemies: the Bishop of Münster and the Archbishop of Cologne, whom Louis XIV. had made his allies. Before, however, declaring war, the two German princes had prudently waited till the Kings of France and England had given the signal.

The Bishop of Münster, after signing a treaty of offensive alliance with Louis XIV., had continued none the less his pacific assurances to the envoy of the republic, Amerongen, to whom he renewed his protestations of fidelity. He declared, however, that he could not oppose the passage of the French troops through his States, and at the same time he pushed forward his armaments with indefatigable activity, 'and his preparations,' writes Wicquefort, 'were those of a prelate who was thinking of quite other matters than repeating his breviary.' The States-General, wishing to be certain of his intentions, sent to him Jacob de Stouvelar, deputy of Overyssel, one of the military commissioners. The Bishop received him courteously, invited him to share his repasts, but caused him to be always accompanied by guards, who never lost sight of him and watched him even in his own room. As soon as he thought himself relieved from all necessity for caution, he sent

him back with a letter to the States-General, in which he complained to them of a plot that had been laid against his life, and denounced the supposed guilty persons; these were the Grand Pensionary de Witt; Hoofdt, member of the Council of Amsterdam and deputy of Holland to the Council of State; Reigersberg, deputy of Zealand to the States-General; and Major-General Wurtz. This accusation was as senseless as it was impudent; not only were the persons at whom it was aimed the most honourable in the republic, but there were besides such divisions amongst them that it required complete ignorance of political parties in the United Provinces to impute to them any project which could have brought them into agreement. Not knowing what pretext to make use of for a rupture with the States-General, the Bishop thus had recourse to the most barefaced expedients. He caused his letter to be followed by a manifesto in which he pretended that he was obliged to defend himself against a republic 'which suborned assassins to attempt his life, debauched his soldiers, corrupted the governors of his fortresses, and employed incendiaries to devastate his diocese.' He thus prefaced by a farce the tragedy of war.

The Archbishop-Elector of Cologne neglected for his part no precautions before leaguing himself with the Bishop of Münster against the republic. Having imposed submission on the town of Cologne, he retained in his principality the French troops whom he had called to his assistance, and for whose presence on his territory he had no longer any excuse. Fearing that the States-General might demand their dismissal, and might think themselves authorised in the event of a refusal to invade his States, he adroitly took into his own service this body of auxiliary troops, which comprised about four thousand men, and obtained the consent of the King of France for them to assume the electoral scarf. By the aid of this subterfuge, he put his ally in possession of Cologne and other towns, such as Neuss, Keyserwert, and Dorsten, which Louis XIV. proposed to use as magazines and arsenals. At the same time, true to the policy of dissimulation that he had always found successful, he sent to the States-General a manifesto in which he

engaged not to violate peace or neutrality. He wished to avoid thus being taken at unawares by an attack which would endanger his principality, so long as the French army was not in a position to come to his rescue. As soon as he felt himself relieved from fears which he took care to exaggerate to the King of France in order to set a higher price on his co-operation, he joined his troops to those of the Bishop of Münster. Stating as the pretext for a rupture with the republic the assistance given by the States-General to the town of Cologne, and their occupation of the town of Rhynberg, he announced to them that he made common cause with the Kings of France and England.

Taken by surprise by attacks from so many enemies, which, according to Temple's expression, 'came upon them like a thunderclap out of a clear sky,' the United Provinces appeared destined to be the victims of triumphant iniquity. But they retained none the less their faith in the success of a just cause. To place it under the Divine protection, the States-General, at the request of the States of Holland, ordered a day of fasting and prayer, which was fixed for the first Wednesday in every month.

Still they could hardly flatter themselves that they would be able to resist the aggression which was now imminent, if they resigned themselves to awaiting it on their own territory, instead of advancing to meet it. They had now only one last chance of turning aside, or at least of delaying, the blow which threatened them, and that was themselves to take the initiative in commencing the attack. 'If we can in the first instance,' writes the Rhyngrave to De Witt, 'cause the enemy's designs in some measure to fail, we shall have won half the victory, more especially as regards the French, who are more given to flashes in the pan than to well-thought-out schemes.' By failing in the boldness requisite for commencing hostilities, the States-General made the Grand Pensionary's courageous advice useless.

Towards the close of the previous year, De Witt, who was fully aware of the strategic importance of the town of Cologne, had urged upon the States-General and the States of Holland

not to allow the Elector to take possession of it, and thus to be in a position to yield it to France. When the States-General had rendered the submission of the town inevitable, by delaying too long the assistance of which it stood in need, he was still not discouraged. No sooner had the French troops established themselves in the Electorate of Cologne, than he unhesitatingly and eagerly advised the adoption of offensive measures. In the previous year Louvois had been alarmed lest this bold determination should enter into the ideas of the Grand Pensionary. In a memorandum addressed to the Minister of the Elector of Cologne, Prince Furstemberg, he pointed out the danger of a sudden attack by which the fortresses the Dutch wished to seize would be carried without a blow being struck before reinforcements could be despatched, and the King of France would be obliged to alter his plan of campaign. 'I have taken the liberty,' writes the Grand Pensionary to his brother, 'to represent to the Spanish ambassador that France, by her King's last answer to the States, has given them legitimate reasons for beginning the attack and striking the first blow as soon as they can find a favourable opportunity.'

De Witt proposed, in fact, to surprise the town of Neuss, in the Electorate of Cologne, which the King of France had selected as a magazine for his supplies. His first suggestion of this scheme not having been followed by any resolution, he renewed it more urgently on the day after the declaration of war. By his advice, the States-General determined to request the Prince of Orange to desire Colonel Steeke to furnish information as to whether it was still possible to set fire to the magazine at Neuss, promising him a large reward in case of success. The attempt was immediately made under the guidance of Major-General Prince John Maurice of Nassau. A body of 1,800 horse and 600 foot was placed under his orders, and he received instructions to lead them through the French outposts.

This tardy expedition was not so successful as might have been expected, and the Prince of Nassau was compelled to inform the Prince of Orange that he had found the enemy on

their guard, and had been unable to maintain sufficient discipline in his troops to conceal his march. 'I have been very unfortunate,' he writes, 'in having been unable to do anything for the service of the State with so strong a force of cavalry, in consequence of the enemy having been informed of our designs. I marched all night in order to arrive at daybreak at the barrier which had to be passed in order to reach the enemy's quarters. Having been informed that there were only five or six troopers on sentry duty at that hour, I thought I might be able to surprise them without making any noise or giving the alarm to the cavalry quarters; but they had already been warned, not only at this barrier but also at all the quarters in the neighbourhood, by peasants who had seen us.'

Prince John Maurice of Nassau, however, marched rapidly to the little town of Huils, which was occupied by a French detachment, and took possession of it. 'I learnt,' he adds, 'that half a league from there, at another barrier in the direction of Meurs, there was a guard of three companies of French cavalry, who had perhaps already been joined by the three others intended to relieve them. I marched straight to the attack, but on the march the infantry as well as the cavalry took to firing so furiously at the hens and geese, that I went myself three or four times to each company to forbid this shooting under pain of death. This disobedience and firing were the cause of our missing these companies, for hearing the shots they sent out to reconnoitre, and having ascertained that we were too strong for them to wait for us, they retired very quickly before us.' The attack on Neuss, which could only have been carried out by means of a surprise, had thus failed; but the design that had fallen through was none the less skilfully conceived. Had it succeeded, Louis XIV. would have lost the arsenal which enabled him to make preparations at his leisure for the conquest of the United Provinces, and the farsighted care of the Grand Pensionary might, even at the last hour, have changed the issue of the war.

De Witt, moreover, left no stone unturned to insure to the States, on sea as well as on land, such feeble chances of

success as still remained to them. He was particularly anxious to prevent a junction between the fleets of France and England. The necessity for averting this danger, by forestalling the enemy, had been pointed out to him before war was declared, in the beginning of the year 1672, by the Pensionary of Zealand, Peter de Huybert. 'It will merely be necessary,' writes Huybert, 'to send into the Channel some twenty frigates accompanied by ships of war and fire-ships, and to direct them against the ports of Brest and La Rochelle. The port and harbour of Brest would undoubtedly present great difficulties; but it is thought that these may be surmounted. As for the attack on the French vessels in the port of La Rochelle, it has only to be attempted to insure success. It must of course be taken into consideration that France may before then have committed no act of hostility; but if the actions and intrigues of France are looked into closely the destruction of her ships would be an enterprise which may well be thought justifiable: it would only be snatching from the hands of that nation the iron which she is now heating in order to plunge it into our bosoms.'

The scheme was, indeed, by no means impracticable. The King of France, according to Pomponne, had at that time no fleet at sea; the coasts were destitute of troops, and the King of England was not yet in a position to unite his vessels to the French fleet. Immediately after the declaration of war De Groot, in his report to the States-General of his embassy to France, repeated the same advice; he had never ceased urging that the greatest efforts should be made at sea, representing that it was only there that they were feared. 'It is only the fleet,' he writes, 'that can make any impression on France, our land forces being only regarded as a means of defence.' He begged that it might be employed against the French colonies, and represented that fifteen frigates would suffice to take from France Cayenne, Martinique, and Saint Christopher.

If this latter expedition appeared too distant to be ventured upon, the same could not be said of an attack upon the French ports, which was boldly encouraged by Ruyter, who

offered to guarantee its success. 'The perfect knowledge of our coasts and harbours, of their strength and weakness, which this great sailor has acquired by so many years spent at sea,' writes Pomponne, 'showed him how easy it would be to attack them, and he assured the States-General that this diversion would prevent the King of France from sending into the field a part of his troops which must in consequence be employed for the defence of the coasts of Saintonge and Gascony.' De Witt shared this confidence, and was anxious not to await a rupture with France before commencing hostilities. He had offered himself to assume the command of the fleet, and to execute the orders of the State. 'The resolution which the Grand Pensionary wishes to take,' writes De Groot, 'is doubtless a generous one, and might have great effect; but we must take care that while defending the arms and legs, we do not expose the more honourable members which are essential to the existence of the body.'

The determination of John de Witt appeared, nevertheless, immovable. A month before the declaration of war he writes to his brother: 'We have a right to attack and destroy the French fleet wherever we may find it.' Three weeks later he writes again on the same subject: 'You know how seriously I am thinking of destroying the enemy's ships at Brest, in the Charente, and elsewhere, before they can join the English fleet.' 'It is necessary,' he adds, 'that, with God's help, we should perform some noteworthy action at sea before the French and English fleets come together.' The success of this enterprise only depended upon its prompt execution, but an insurmountable obstacle was placed in its way by delays in the naval preparations.

Prevented from carrying it out by Charles II.'s declaration of war, which deprived the republic of the free use of her naval forces, the Grand Pensionary boldly resumed against England the plans of aggression that he was obliged to renounce against France. When the fleet had received orders to meet in the Texel in the beginning of May, he hastened there with the commissioners of the States-General, in order to make arrangements for the naval operations with

Admiral Ruyter and his brother Cornelius, and immediately gave orders to put to sea. He overcame the ill-will or ignorance of the pilots, and succeeded in getting the ships out of harbour, but was still obliged to wait till the wind had changed, enabling them to set sail on May 9, 1672. The two brothers parted, confident rather than anxious, in order to carry on—one in the government, the other in the fleet—their patriotic duties: they were not to see one another again until the fatal day on which they met once more to share the same death.

The resolution adopted on board the flag-ship by the deputies of the States-General for naval affairs, in the presence of Ruyter and the Grand Pensionary, directed the fleet to advance towards the Thames; after making all preparations for a descent, they were to enter the river and to attack and destroy any vessels that might be found there. This scheme was hindered by fresh delays caused by the necessity of waiting for the squadron of Zealand, and nearly the whole of the English fleet took advantage of this to quit the Thames, the perfect calm which now fell not allowing them to be followed. Ruyter attempted in vain to come up with them. 'As ill-luck would have it,' writes Cornelius de Witt to his wife, 'we have not caught up the English fleet, which we expected to find in the Downs. We sailed there to-day, but found no ships, so that we shall be obliged to go in search of them.' They had sailed in the direction of the Isle of Wight. By the advice of Cornelius de Witt, who addressed the most earnest exhortations to the crews, the Council of War determined to follow them closely, but learned almost immediately that they had effected a junction with the French fleet at Portsmouth, and had thus avoided an attack which would have had disastrous consequences.

Though disappointed once more in his expectations, the Grand Pensionary did not despair of overcoming the bad fortune which deprived him of the success he vainly hoped for. He hastened to write to his brother, in two letters dated the same day, to inform him that according to information furnished by the ambassador, Boreel, who had not yet quitted

England, several vessels belonging to the English fleet had remained in the Thames—one of them being the Prince Royal carrying 120 guns; and he urged him to make a bold attempt to destroy them. 'I consider it of the greatest importance,' he writes, 'to use all means for ravaging the English coast and seizing on the fort of Sheerness, as well as for destroying and burning the English ships which have hitherto been detained in the Thames. Our lighter frigates might then sail up the river and devastate the country, so as to cause consternation in the defenceless capital, and to incite the malcontents in London to rise, which might succeed, if God by His divine grace will bring about a favourable turn in affairs.' 'You and M. de Ruyter,' he adds in conclusion, 'are best able to judge what may be necessary under the circumstances; in any case, I hope no time will be lost in setting to work, and that we may learn at any moment that a bold stroke has succeeded.'

The Council of War immediately took this scheme into consideration. The Grand Pensionary had caused them to be invested with full powers for the direction of the fleet, in the hope that the authority of his brother, as plenipotentiary of the States-General, might at last insure the execution of his bold designs. But the greater part of the English fleet having quitted the Thames, and being in a position to close the mouth of the river if that of the United Provinces ventured into it, the danger of the expedition outweighed its utility.

Cornelius de Witt did not, however, think himself justified in neglecting the urgent advice given to him. Before receiving his brother's last letter, which crossed his own, and in which John de Witt was forced to acknowledge 'that the junction of the allied fleets altered the measures which should be taken,' he insisted upon the Council of War allowing the expedition into the Thames to be attempted, whatever might be its risks. At the same time, in order to avert the apprehended danger, he caused the approaches to the river to be guarded by the fleet, while a squadron was sent to sail up it, May 24, 1672. This squadron, composed of fifteen of the lightest vessels, of eight frigates, and a few fire-ships, was entrusted to Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent, who during the last war between

the United Provinces and England had led the expedition against the fort of Chatham and destroyed the English fleet. His name seemed a pledge of victory. Cornelius de Witt was eager to accompany him, but Ruyter retained him on board his ship for fear of being obliged to engage in battle if the enemy's fleet drew near.

Van Ghent, confident that his return could not be cut off, set sail full of hope, trusting to come up with the seven English ships which had shown themselves in the mouth of the Thames. He followed them as far as the fort of Sheerness, under the shelter of which they withdrew, without his being able to force them either to come to an action or to retreat farther. He had not at his disposal a sufficient force to attack and reduce the fort, and not daring to continue his advance at the risk of finding his retreat cut off, he unwillingly determined to return. The ships which he had pursued were at any rate separated from the English fleet, and could not rejoin it; but, apart from this advantage, the last offensive operation on which John de Witt had obstinately built his hopes had once more brought upon him irretrievable disappointment.

It was the States of Zealand which, out of enmity for Holland, had caused the plan of campaign of the Grand Pensionary to fail at sea as well as on land. They were not satisfied with putting obstacles in the way of sending the assistance demanded by the States of Holland on behalf of the town of Cologne, which might have prevented the King of France from obtaining access to the United Provinces. By delaying the departure of the squadron of Zealand, they had also prevented the King of England from being attacked by the fleet of the republic in his own country, and had thus caused the loss of the opportunity for a victory by means of which the States-General might have remained masters of the sea, and obliged the two Kings to make peace.

'It is most deplorable,' writes Cornelius de Witt to the States-General, 'that in consequence of the delay of the Zealand ships, contrary to the orders of their High Mightinesses, our enemies should have been given an opportunity of uniting their forces.' The Grand Pensionary, who never

swerved from the most scrupulous caution, blamed his brother for having thus publicly reproached one of the confederate States, instead of confining himself to confidential communications. He himself, however, complained of this inexcusable conduct in a private letter to the Prince of Orange. 'It is unfortunate,' he says, 'that our fleet was not able to overtake the English fleet before its junction with the French, which the weather and the wind would have permitted, according to human calculations, if the Zealand vessels, in compliance with the reiterated orders of their High Mightinesses, had put to sea and joined more speedily the bulk of the fleet. There will now be, as far as can be foreseen, a dangerous and difficult battle; but God the Lord who governs all knows what is best for the State, and we must bow in obedience to His will.' Both brothers thus pointed out the rock against which had been shattered the projects for an offensive war whereby the republic might have been spared the disasters that threatened her. Neither had neglected any means of averting them, but none the less on them was to fall the weight of the mistakes which they had vainly sought to prevent or to repair.

The failure of the enterprises destined to hinder the aggression of their enemies obliged the States-General to stand on the defensive, but the insufficiency of their military resources and the extent of the frontiers which they had to protect were almost insurmountable obstacles to successful resistance.

The uncertainty of the plan of attack, which Louis XIV. kept an impenetrable secret so long as he had not commenced his war operations, put the United Provinces at his mercy. The ambassador of the republic in Paris, De Groot, had been forced to content himself with transmitting to his masters the various plans of campaign which he heard talked about, without being able to discover the one preferred by the King of France. 'Some say,' he writes, 'that the army of our enemies will go first to Maestricht; others, to the Rhine. Their chief design may very well be to occupy the line of the Yssel, take possession of Arnheim, and advance into the heart of the country.' He had thus early clearly foreseen the

course of events, but his latest communications raised fresh illusions in the mind of the Grand Pensionary, by leading him to hope that Louis XIV. would not go beyond 'warlike demonstrations.' 'The King,' writes De Groot before his departure from Paris, 'is said to have no intention of carrying on a lengthened war; he will summon the first fortresses which he comes across to surrender, attack them with his entire forces if they resist, and put their garrisons to the sword, thus obtaining by means of terror the submission of the rest.' It was only on the eve of the entry of the French army into the territory of the United Provinces, that serious information was given to De Witt of a project of invasion of Holland itself, causing him to fear the passage of the Rhine or the Yssel.

Believing that they had only to protect the fortified towns on the Rhine and the fortress of Maestricht against the attack that threatened them, the States-General had given all their attention to fortifying these places. They proposed to put them in a condition to sustain a siege, in the hope that by thus checking Louis's invasion they might complete their military preparations and give time for their allies to come to their assistance. It was therefore in the direction of the Spanish Netherlands and on the Rhine that they determined to establish their first line of defence.

As regarded the Netherlands, it seemed needless to provide for the security of those frontiers which Louis XIV. could not attack without declaring war on Spain and invading her provinces. But Spain was so fearful of exposing herself to the attacks of the King of France by siding with the republic, that she demanded from the States-General their armed protection on behalf of the Netherlands. They had therefore been obliged to place at her disposal on their frontiers five regiments, which they promised to increase to thirteen, and the command of which was given to Zuylestein, lieutenant-general of the infantry. Their fortresses in North Brabant were furnished with troops; Bois-le-Duc, Breda, and Bergen-op-Zoom were occupied by 2,500 men, reinforced by detachments of militia and citizens. The garrisons distributed amongst these towns were not, however, sufficient; the necessary supplies

were wanting, and only Bois-le-Duc could be made safe from attack by the aid of the burgher companies who worked on the ramparts.

Outside this line of fortified towns, covering the frontiers of the Netherlands, the republic had made Maestricht her arsenal. In spite of its isolated position and distance of fifty leagues from Bois-le-Duc, Maestricht was the key to the United Provinces on the south. It might even be used as an entrenched camp for the States-General to take the offensive against the King of France, if he should advance into their territory without taking possession of the town, and served also to guarantee the Netherlands against any fresh aggression. The States-General, therefore, in order to give Spain the security of which her alliance was to be the price, felt it incumbent on them to keep up a garrison in Maestricht exceeding the necessities of defence, and raised it to 8,400 men, reinforced by 1,000 Spanish cavalry. The command of the fortress was entrusted to the Rhyngrave, who had grown old in the service of the republic, and to whom by reason of his age the Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, Count Monterey, would have preferred Major-General Wurtz. Two commissioners—Martin de Crommon, deputy of the States-General, and John Egmont van den Neuburg, deputy of the Council of State—had been appointed to assist him. Contrary to the allegations of Pellisson, who represents them as eager to withdraw at the approach of danger and prevented by the Rhyngrave, they declared themselves resolved to be buried in the town, sooner than yield it up. The Rhyngrave himself, to whom Beverningh by the advice of the Grand Pensionary had sent an encouraging message from the Prince of Orange, appeared disposed to defend the town to the last extremity.

The advanced posts of the United Provinces near the Rhine were: Orsoy, Rhynberg, Wesel, and Emmerich, situated in the Duchy of Cleves and belonging to the Elector of Brandenburg. These fortresses, which commanded the course of the Rhine, would have required extensive repairs to enable them to offer prolonged resistance. The works intended for their defence had remained unfinished or were falling into

ruin; their guns were insufficient or ill-appointed, and they withdrew nearly 5,000 men from the active forces to no good purpose. In order to profit by this advanced line of defence it would have been necessary, according to the advice of the Prince of Orange, to unite all the military forces within one fortress, and Wesel appeared the most advantageous for such a concentration of troops. Moreover, if the Rhine was to form their basis of resistance, the army of operation should have been sent to the banks of that river between Rhynberg and Wesel; it might thus have protected the fortresses and obliged the enemy to retire upon Maestricht. This was the plan which Colonel Bampfield had communicated to the States-General, and which had been known in France long before. But, on the one hand, the just fear of removing the army from the frontier at the risk of making a retreat disastrous—on the other, the necessity for keeping a watch over the threatening movements of the Bishop of Münster in the province of Overyssel, prevented this plan from being carried out; and the fortresses of the Rhine were left to provide for their own defence without any hope of being relieved.

It was, therefore, on the territory of the United Provinces that the army was to await the enemy, while occupying the position of the Yssel. This line of defence was strongly supported at its two extremities. At one end it covered the fortresses which defended Overyssel, and was connected with those of Friesland and Groningen in the north by means of a narrow causeway along the Zuyder Zee, which might easily be made inaccessible to the enemy by inundation. At the other extremity it extended along the Rhine to the valley of the Wahal, which being defended by the fort of Schenck, supposed to be impregnable, and by the town of Nimeguen, occupied by a garrison of 2,500 men, would prevent any access to the United Provinces from the south. The line of the Yssel might, therefore, be considered as the principal barrier against invasion, but it would not suffice to insure the security of the United Provinces. If it should be forced, they would be left completely unprotected, unless it was supported by a second

line near enough to arrest the enemy's progress and to save Holland at least from the danger of invasion.

The Grand Pensionary had not awaited the rupture with France before completing this work of defence. The publication of Delacourt, entitled 'Maxims and Reflections,' of which John de Witt himself had written two chapters and inspired others, recommended, so far back as the year 1668, the establishment of a fortified line to be carried in front of Utrecht and called the line of the Grebbe. No steps having been taken at that period, fresh proposals had been submitted to the States of Holland when the danger became imminent. Negotiations were entered into with the States of Utrecht for fortifying the town of Utrecht and that of Naarden near Amsterdam; and for joining them by a line of defence along the valley of the Vecht. 'Your reflections upon the entrenchments of the Vecht and the fortifications of Utrecht have been much appreciated,' writes John de Witt to his brother, who in his capacity as deputy to the camp was actively employed in carrying out this project.

Conferences were held, but to no purpose. The States of Utrecht could not be induced to consent to bear any part of the cost of the fortifications of Naarden. The Grand Pensionary, convinced of the necessity for coming to some conclusion without further delay, tried to bring about an agreement by offering to rest satisfied with the execution of a scheme for inundating the neighbouring country. The report of the engineers, proving that the expenses would exceed the estimate, furnished a fresh pretext for the objections of the deputies of Utrecht, and all the works were once more adjourned. 'For years,' writes De Witt to Beverningh, 'I have been urging forethought for the security of Holland in particular, without wishing thereby to strike any blow at the defence of the State in general. It is not unknown to you that the fortifications of Naarden were commenced with that view; but in consequence of foolish rivalries the enterprise has been once more overthrown.' The Grand Pensionary's plans of defence could not therefore be put into execution, and had unfortunately the same fate as his schemes

for an offensive war; but they will suffice nevertheless to exonerate him from blame.

The line of the Yssel, which extended from the Zuyder Zee to the Rhine, remained, therefore, the only one that could be relied on as a basis for resistance. The river not being sufficiently deep to form a barrier against invasion, it was necessary to throw up entrenchments at certain points, and to supplement these by inundations in other parts. Prince John Maurice of Nassau had been charged with the construction of the works of fortification. He carried them on with indefatigable activity, and by the end of April the most important works were completed, at a cost of 35,000 florins; but they stopped at the junction of the Yssel and the Rhine, the left bank of the latter being left very imperfectly defended. The inundations did not at first produce the effect that might have been expected, in spite of the steps taken by the Prince of Orange for opening the sluices, which, wrote the deputies to the camp, 'were to protect the country, by inundating it, better than 6,000 men could have done.' The negligence of the commandant of Doesburg allowed the water to escape where it ought to have been kept in, thereby rendering several parts of the river fordable. 'The shore is widening in front of our entrenchments,' writes Beverningh to the Grand Pensionary, with increasing anxiety; 'it is becoming accessible everywhere, and will form a very easy passage for the enemy.'

It was indispensable, therefore, that all the available troops should be employed to guard the Yssel instead of being concentrated on the positions which seemed to be most threatened. In order to protect this line of defence along its entire length, extending over a space of sixteen or twenty leagues, it would have been necessary, according to Wicquefort, to employ an army of 100,000, or at least of 60,000, men, amply provided with all war material. The troops at the disposal of the Prince of Orange were far from reaching this number, and the inadequacy of their equipment increased their weakness. 'What has distressed me above all,' writes De Witt to the Prince of Orange, 'is to learn that the army of the Yssel has been so long without gunpowder, and that at this very

moment it is in want of gun-carriages. I implore your Highness to let me know in what state matters are, and what I can do to supply you as well as the army with all you require.' Beverningh replied: 'I hope that for the present we shall have enough gunpowder. As for gun-carriages, I am afraid that there is just now no remedy; in a fortnight's time we shall have barely seven. I am having six got ready now.' The artillery was thus dismounted and made to some extent useless.

The preparations for defence were still further hindered by the small number of troops to which the army in the field was reduced. The occupation of Maestricht employed 7,500 men; a contingent of five regiments, consisting of about 5,000 men, was placed at the disposal of the Governor-General of the Netherlands in the district of Bergen-op-Zoom; 3,500 men had been despatched to other places in North Brabant; and finally to the garrisons in the fortresses of the Rhine and of Nimeguen, numbering 7,500 men, must be added those of Friesland and Groningen, which consisted of not less than 4,000, and those of Overyssel, consisting of about 1,300.

This distribution of troops employed as many as 30,000 men. The division available for the defence of the Yssel, although it had been increased by fresh reinforcements, did not exceed therefore 22,000 men—14,400 infantry, and 7,600 cavalry. Instead of having this division under his hand, the Prince of Orange was obliged to divide it still further into different detachments drawn up in *échelons* along the river. They were too distant from one another to be quickly concentrated in case of necessity, and at most of the posts were too weak to hold out without assistance. The Prince of Orange, therefore, writes to Beverningh: 'I am in great distress, learning the approach of the enemy, and having only insufficient forces to oppose to him. The only means of safety is to send all the available forces to the Yssel. You must write to the Hague without an hour's delay, to beg that as many soldiers as possible may be sent from Maestricht, Bois-le-Duc, Breda, Bergen-op-Zoom, and the strong places in Flanders. I think also that the few horse and foot which

may still be in Holland should be sent here. Otherwise I see no prospect of being able to prevent the enemy crossing the Yssel.' The Prince of Orange could not, indeed, fail to perceive the difficulty of his task. Out of an available force of 52,000 men, he had at present only 22,000 at his disposal, while the King of France could bring together 90,000 for the attack.

The Grand Pensionary of Holland had never ceased demanding that fresh reinforcements should be sent more quickly and in greater numbers to join the army, and he complained constantly of the delays in recruiting. He pointed out, moreover, the necessity for sending to the camp twenty-eight regiments of infantry, instead of being satisfied with sixteen, in order that the army in the field should consist of 28,500 foot, and should amount with the cavalry to thirty-five or thirty-six thousand men. Convinced that it was too weak to repel the invasion if it continued to be divided into detachments, he proposed to unite it into one single body, which should advance to meet the enemy. As soon as the danger appeared to be removed from the Low Countries, he declared that all the available troops ought to be sent to the Yssel, and proposed that they should be supported by armed boats, which would protect the course of the Yssel and of the Rhine. He had already sent two fresh regiments to the camp, besides some companies withdrawn from the garrisons of Breda and Gornichem, to which he added some militia troops belonging to Utrecht, and seventeen armed companies of peasants, representing about four thousand men.

He had spared no pains in order that more considerable military forces should be speedily placed at the disposal of the Prince of Orange. In compliance with his request, the States of Holland determined to send him fifteen companies of their provincial militia, to the number of 1,800 men. The Grand Pensionary had besides turned his mind for some time past to the subject of the recall of the five regiments which had been despatched to the frontiers of the Netherlands to protect the Spanish provinces against an attack on the part of the King of France. He had not awaited the declaration of war before demanding their return. So far back as the month of

March, he declared to his brother Cornelius, who had been sent to Brussels on a mission to the Governor-General of the Netherlands, how much he regretted the disposal of that body of troops. 'I may add,' he writes, 'that if I facilitated this arrangement to please Count Monterey, it was contrary to my own judgment, and because I felt convinced that you had already committed yourself to some extent with him; for, as matters stand now, I should have refused to send any assistance till further notice, as our plans may fail or be impossible to carry out, from want of a considerable number of troops, who are engaged without any necessity, and, in my opinion, without any prospect of an attack at that point, contrary to the interests of the State.' De Witt did not consider the despatch of 3,000 Spanish horse promised by Count Monterey sufficient compensation for this engagement. On the eve of the declaration of war, therefore, he caused a resolution to be forwarded to his brother, in which the States of Holland urged the necessity for using the whole of their military forces in the defence of the territory of the republic. Cornelius de Witt repaired to the Hague to obtain a respite to this order of recall, and thus to prevent Count Monterey, thinking himself abandoned and unable to defend the Low Countries, from treating with the King of France.

Fresh efforts, encouraged by the Grand Pensionary and supported by the Prince of Orange and by Van Beuningen, who had succeeded Cornelius de Witt at Brussels, brought about a change in the dispositions of the Governor of the Spanish Netherlands. In order to testify his good-will to the States, he despatched 1,000 horse to Maestricht, followed by a body of cavalry of 1,650 men, under the command of his two ablest lieutenants, the Marquis de Louvignies and De Villeneuve, declaring himself ready to pawn his jewels in order to provide for their pay. He consented also to the departure of the troops placed at his disposal by the Spanish Government, which the republic could no longer dispense with, requiring them for purposes of defence. As the danger drew nearer, the States sent orders to the five regiments they were withdrawing from the Netherlands to march day and

night, so as to rejoin the army and bring a tardy reinforcement to the detachments detailed for the defence of the Yssel. Two only could be formed into line before the retreat of the army; the three others and the Spanish cavalry, forming a reserve of about 4,500 men, joined the Prince of Orange when he fell back upon Holland, without having had an opportunity of being opposed to the first shock of the enemy.

The Grand Pensionary would have liked to do even more. The garrison of Maestricht appeared to him capable of reduction without any danger to the safety of the place. He was desirous, therefore, of replacing a portion of the troops that were assembled there, by some of the citizens and by some regiments of Spanish infantry which he urgently demanded of Count Monterey. He proposed to augment thus, by a fresh reinforcement of 5,000 men, the contingent of regiments withdrawn from the Netherlands, and to raise to at least 36,000 the force assembled under the command of the Prince of Orange. The uncertainty as to Louis's plan of attack was the cause of fresh delay before any decision could be come to, and when orders to march were at length given to some of the regiments of the garrison of Maestricht, the advance of the French army had already intercepted their route. The Prince of Orange was therefore reduced, even after he had received a portion of the reinforcements sent to the army, to commence the campaign with not more than twenty-five or twenty-six thousand men.

In order to increase the chances of resistance by the augmentation of their available troops, it would have been necessary for the States-General to gain time, and De Witt had reckoned on the prolonged siege of their frontier fortresses for arresting the advance of the enemy. The suddenness of the attack, which disappointed their expectations, prevented them from completing their defensive measures, and the weakness of their main body of troops, inadequately reinforced, opened the way to invasion.

Early in the month of May, Louis XIV., who had hastened his departure from Paris, 'to avoid the sadness of farewells' according to Madame de Sévigné, rejoined his army at Charleroi and gave the signal for opening the campaign, of

which he had directed the preparations with equal forethought and precision. He was accompanied by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Pomponne, and by Louvois, who had just been appointed Minister of State. A hundred and ten thousand men, forming the finest and most numerous army which had ever been seen in Europe, were ready to march. 'There is no longer any person of quality remaining in Paris,' writes Madame de Sévigné; 'if a man is seen in the street with a sword, the little children cry out at him.' It was no longer a question of a military promenade similar to those which five years before had taken place when the French troops entered the Spanish Netherlands. The baggage of the officers and of the court had been strictly limited. A serious expedition was preparing.

The military forces which the King of France had at his disposal seemed to make all resistance useless. While the Duke of Luxemburg was told off to the command of the auxiliary troops, who to the number of about six thousand reinforced those of the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne, the army commanded by the King was divided into two bodies, according to a plan of campaign decided upon the previous year. One, of 30,000 men, which was to serve as an advanced guard, had been mustered at Sedan, and placed under the orders of the Prince of Condé; the other, concentrated at Charleroi, and numbering 80,000 men, was commanded by Viscount Turenne, who was to be nominally under the orders of the King's brother, the Duke of Orleans. In the absence of the three marshals, Bellefonds, De Créqui, and D'Humières, who, at the risk of incurring the royal displeasure, had refused to serve under him, claiming to be his equals, Turenne had as his lieutenant-generals, Count de Soissons, colonel-general of the Swiss Guard, the Duke de Roannois, the Duke de Lude, master-general of ordnance, the Duke de la Feuillade, Count de Lorge, the Marquis de Rochefort, and Gadagne. The Chevalier de Lorraine, the sorry favourite of the Duke of Orleans, Martinet, lieutenant-colonel of the King's regiment, the reformer of the French infantry, Montal, Genlis, and Vitry acted as major-generals. The Marquis de Rana was colonel-general of

dragoons, and the Chevalier de Fourelle quartermaster-general of the light cavalry, which he had been commissioned to reorganise. The staff of the Prince of Condé comprised as lieutenant-generals, Count d'Estrades and Count de Guiche, whom a long residence in the United Provinces had made perfectly acquainted with the country, Saint Abre, and Foucault; and as major-generals, Count du Plessis Praslin, Count Nogent, Magalotti, and the Marquis de Choiseul. These were the flower of the French nobility; they did honour to their country.

Though unable without provoking Spain to make his way across the Netherlands, which would have been his shortest and easiest route, Louis XIV. found himself obliged nevertheless to enter a part of that country. He therefore requested Count Monterey's permission to pass through, to which the latter, not daring to refuse him, replied that he must refer the matter to the Spanish court. The King of France, without waiting for the answer, advanced along the Sambre, making two halts on Spanish territory. When Count Monterey sent to remonstrate with him, he had already encamped in the bishopric of Liège, which belonged to the Elector of Cologne, who left it entirely at his disposal for the entry of his troops. Leaving behind him, between Ath and Cambrai, a corps of observation under the command of Nancré, he descended the left bank of the Meuse, while the Prince of Condé, who had quitted Sedan, was advancing along the right bank.

No definitive resolution had yet been come to regarding the plan of attack. Louis XIV. awaited the junction of his two main bodies of troops, which he had appointed to meet him at Viset, before assembling his Council of War, which had to decide between two opinions, those of Condé and Turenne. Condé was in favour of laying siege to Maestricht, of which he expected speedily to obtain possession. Turenne, more cautious, was opposed to this, fearing that the siege might delay too long the march of the army. In taking possession of Maestricht, Louis would have followed the more prudent course. Not only would the possession of that fortress insure a basis of operations, but it would also threaten the Netherlands and

prevent Spain from cutting off the retreat of the French army in case of a reverse; it seemed thus to put into the King's hands the key to the Spanish possessions and to the United Provinces. But the town was too well fortified, and protected by too numerous a garrison, to allow of its being carried by storm. If the army delayed its march for the purpose of besieging it, the States-General would have time to increase their forces and to complete their preparations for defence. Moreover, although the line of attack closed by Maestricht was the most direct and the shortest, it led up to the Wahal, which must be crossed in order to advance directly into Guelders and Holland; and the Wahal, protected by the width of its stream as well as by the importance of the fortresses which commanded the passage, offered a serious obstacle to invasion. Access to the territory of the United Provinces would therefore be more easily obtained by directing the attack upon some other point.

In accordance with the advice of Louvois, it was determined to give up any attempt at seizing Maestricht. In order, however, to hold in check the strong garrison of that place and to prevent it from making any offensive movement, Turenne proposed that the troops should occupy the neighbouring small towns of Maseyck and Tongres, above and below Maestricht, which were within the bishopric of Liège. The chapter made a vain attempt at resistance and refused to give them up, urging the neutrality of the episcopal territory; but the King of France, by a rapid investment, secured their possession, to which the Elector secretly assented. The fortifications of Maseyck were restored, and, as a measure of precaution, a rear-guard of 6,000 foot and 4,000 horse was left in the bishopric of Liège, under the command of Chamilly. The garrison of Maestricht was thus rendered useless for the defence of the United Provinces, and the hostile army retained at the same time possession of the Meuse, by which in case of a retreat it would preserve its communications with France. Louis XIV. might now commence with safety a campaign of invasion.

After a fortnight's delay, he ordered his troops to move in

a different direction from that which they had hitherto followed. He withdrew from the Meuse and approached the Rhine. Confident of finding in the States of the Elector of Cologne the assistance he had skilfully secured for himself, he encamped below Cologne, at Neuss, where his magazines had been amply provisioned, and proceeded along the left bank with Turenne, while Condé received orders to move to the right bank. The French army arrived without interference in the neighbourhood of the strong places occupied by the garrisons of the States-General on the banks of the Rhine, which were the advanced posts of the United Provinces. In accordance with the suggestion made the previous year to Louvois by the Duke of Luxemburg, the order was given to attack them simultaneously. On the same day Louis, with the Duke of Orleans and Turenne on the left bank, and Condé on the right bank, laid siege to Orsoy, Rhynberg, Burick, and Wesel, 'which the Dutch, unless they were the most wretched people in the world, should have been ready to defend.' 'I thought it more advantageous for my plans and less commonplace as regards glory,' writes Louis XIV. to Colbert, 'to attack at the same time four places on the Rhine, and to command in person at all the four sieges. I hope no one will complain that I have disappointed public expectation.'

The fortresses which during the war of independence had arrested the progress of the greatest soldiers of Spain, Farnese and Spinola, yielded without resistance to the King of France. The first of the four fortresses to be attacked was Orsoy, which, invested on June 2, 1672, surrendered the following day. It was defended by a garrison of 800 men commanded by an officer named Mulard, and offered no resistance. 'The ditches having no water, the garrison did not even venture to await the attack, though the place was protected by five bastions. The governor contented himself with causing a few guns to be fired, which killed some officers and volunteers of the besieging army, and as soon as the trench was prepared, under cover of two false attacks made during the night, he opened the gates without waiting for a shot. The garrison were none the less treated as prisoners of war, and

were not even allowed the protection of the law of nations. Seven French soldiers who were amongst them, and had been refused leave to depart when recalled by the King of France, were barbarously hung; the officers and soldiers of the States-General had to submit to ill-treatment from which even their wives were not spared by the enemy. This was a foretaste of the cruelties and severities which conquest was about to bring upon the United Provinces.

Rhynberg followed the example of Orsoy, and, although capable of defending itself, showed equal submission to Louis XIV. The besiegers restricted themselves to an engagement of outposts between some of the French cavalry and some infantry belonging to the garrison which had been sent out to reconnoitre. The surrender was hastened by treachery: Baron Daniel d'Osory, an Irishman by birth, colonel of cavalry, commanded the fortress under the orders of the nominal governor, Van Bassen, who had succeeded Poleman, an energetic officer whom the Prince of Orange had recalled to the camp. Gained over to the cause of the King of France by a member of his family, D'Osory had kept up private communications with the hostile army, and began by entering into a treaty for a capitulation, in order to afford a pretext for admitting the French envoys, who were thus enabled to reconnoitre the condition of the fortress. After parleying for some days, he formally received into the town the Duke de Duras, who promised him in the King's name to allow the garrison to withdraw with arms and baggage if the town were given up to him. The Council of War having assembled, the governor, supported by two brave officers, Captain Toulemonde and Ensign Winck, vehemently opposed the capitulation, and suggested that the outer works should be blown up; but D'Osory had gained over all the other officers, and the town surrendered without a single musket shot having been fired. The armed frigates which might have aided the resistance of the town were stopped by the French artillery, abandoned by their crews, and captured from the shore. The garrison, numbering 1,500 men, were sent with arms and baggage back to Maestricht, and D'Osory had the audacity to accompany

them, thus exposing himself to the punishment due to his crime, for which he paid with his life. A French regiment replaced the garrison of the town, and the Catholic worship was solemnly restored.

Two days previously, Burick had also been occupied by the French army. The governor of the fortress, Heeckeren, Lord of Peckendam, at any rate did his duty, in spite of the dilapidation of the ramparts, which were only provided with ten guns, and the inadequacy of the garrison, numbering only 400 men. Without allowing himself to be intimidated, he exhorted the officers to sacrifice their lives, and spared neither promises nor threats to obtain the armed co-operation of the citizens. Determined to use every means to preserve the fortress for the States, he attempted to mislead the enemy with regard to the limited number of defenders at his disposal by causing a large number of lighted matches to be conveyed to the walls, which might make it appear as if the garrison amounted to 1,600 men. Turenne, informed by deserters of this subterfuge, and not wishing to prolong a siege which in the space of two days had cost him 600 men, pushed forward the attack. The Council of War, perceiving that they could not repel the assault, determined to ask for a capitulation. Turenne referred the matter to the King, and before receiving his orders demanded that one of the gates should be handed over to the regiment of French Guards. He complimented the governor at the same time on the energy of his resistance; but Louis XIV. gave the latter no credit for his courageous behaviour, and sent word that he expected the garrison to surrender as prisoners of war.

The following day, Wesel, situated on the other bank of the Rhine, the key to the United Provinces on the east, fell into the hands of the Prince of Condé. The treachery of the officers and the cowardice of the inhabitants made him master of it, the garrison, consisting of not less than 1,500 men, having made no effort to defend themselves. The governor, Martin van Zucchem, who had served under the Stadtholder Maurice of Nassau, and who forty-three years before had assisted in putting the States-General in possession

of the town, had been detained at the Hague, where his powers were distrusted on account of his great age. He had been succeeded by an inexperienced officer, Van Santem, 'who,' writes Wicquefort,' had forgotten the duties of a captain, which he had exercised for a considerable time, without having learnt those of a colonel, which he was now called upon to fulfil.' After an attack lasting two days, he allowed the fort of La Lippe, which protected the town and might have checked the enemy for a considerable time, to be surprised during the night by the regiment of Auvergne. The frigate intended to assist in its defence withdrew, as if the fate of the place were now quite hopeless, and at break of day the inhabitants of Wesel saw with stupefaction the flag of the King of France floating on the ramparts. They immediately began to lay down the arms they had taken up for the purpose of aiding the garrison, and the ladies of the town implored of the Prince of Condé the favour of being allowed to leave it. The Prince replied 'that he could not deprive himself of what was the fairest part of his triumph.' The officers, whom he had previously gained over, took advantage of this reply to lead the inhabitants to fear the vengeance of the enemy.

Intimidated by threats the burgomasters took the initiative, and repaired to the camp of the Prince of Condé, while the officer charged with the defence of the advanced posts, Major Copes, withdrew into the town the detachment under his command, forbidding it to fire on the enemy. The Prince of Condé took advantage of this retreat to order his troops to advance, and gave directions for cutting through the dyke that kept in the water of the ditches. The town was thus given up to him without defence, and the keys were sent to him. All attempt at resistance being now useless, the governor consented to a capitulation, by the terms of which the garrison were to remain prisoners for a period of six weeks, after which they were to be admitted to ransom; they were disarmed and shut up in the church, while the former French ambassador to the States-General, Count d'Estrades, took over the command of the place in the King's name. Van

Santem left the town with seven captains for whose liberty he had stipulated; but the Prince of Orange had them arrested as traitors, and gave orders for proceedings to be taken against them, that the commandants might be brought to a sense of their duty, which they seemed to vie with each other in forgetting.

Louis XIV. having taken possession of these four towns, of which not one had cost him a siege, now found himself master of both banks of the Rhine. By means of a bridge of boats, he assembled all his troops on the right bank in order not to be stopped by the Wahal, which is the widest branch of the Rhine, and which he would have had to cross if he had gone over to the left bank. He then continued his march along the river, in order to find an easier crossing farther down. Two places only might still arrest his progress, Rees and Emmerich. Emmerich was evacuated at Condé's approach, on the demand made to the States by the Elector of Brandenburg, who claimed neutrality for that town, in which the archives of the duchy of Cleves were shut up. Rees, about to be besieged by Turenne, who had been joined by Condé, had formerly been one of the most renowned fortresses of the United Provinces. Lieutenant-Colonel Winbergen, a member of the nobility of Guelders, who was its governor, had only a garrison of 400 men under his command, but he was determined to let himself be buried beneath the ruins of the fortress sooner than surrender. The cowardice of one of his captains, Van der Hoeve, who abandoned the fort on which depended the preservation of the town, placed it at the mercy of the besieging army. Winbergen, however, refused to sign the capitulation Louvois wished to impose upon him, and which he considered humiliating. But he was coerced by the inhabitants, and obliged to consent to leave the garrison prisoners, only stipulating that they should be neither plundered nor ill-treated.

Nine days had sufficed to deprive the United Provinces of all the advanced posts that closed the entrance to their frontiers on the east. 'It is impossible to see without astonishment,' writes Condé with noble simplicity, 'such great

and happy successes in so short a time.' The loss of these isolated towns did not yet, it is true, affect the territory of the republic; but the almost overwhelming rapidity of these conquests revealed the irremediable weakness of the defence. It inspired the French army with a confidence that added still further chances of victory to its irresistible advance. Condé, who when in Paris had appeared anxious as to the result of the invasion, now went so far as to bet 100,000 pistoles that he would cross the Yssel without the loss of a hundred men. 'You will see that the King is so completely fortunate,' writes Madame de Sévigné, 'that he will only have to state what he wishes in Europe, without taking the trouble to go himself at the head of his army. People will be too happy to give it to him. I assure you he will cross the Yssel as if it were the Seine. The joy of the courtiers is a good sign. Terror prepares the way everywhere for a ready submission.'

In fact, a weakness that was becoming contagious was showing itself in all parts of the United Provinces. The deputies sent to the camp declared 'that the present state of affairs would appear less formidable to them if it were not for the want of courage which they could not remedy.' 'On learning the approach of the enemy,' writes Beverningh to De Witt, 'the militia officers are seized with such a panic of terror, that I myself am alarmed, when I think what may be expected from them.' 'As for the peasants,' add the deputies to the camp, 'they point out that their month's engagement has expired, and demand to be dismissed, which would save the cost of their keep.' 'It is impossible,' writes Beverningh again, on learning the successes of the French army, 'to describe or make anyone understand what discouragement and confusion exist in the towns amongst the magistrates and inhabitants. I know that I have had the reputation in Holland of representing matters too unfavourably. God grant it may be true, and that I may be a false prophet! But I consider it ridiculous folly not to see and recognise danger out of a spirit of bravado.' De Witt, though less accessible to alarm than anyone else, could not refrain from

saying, on hearing of the loss of Wesel, 'Half the republic is lost.'

The Prince of Orange himself was not proof against discouragement. 'I fear, indeed,' writes Beverningh, 'that if he is not supported, he will be reduced to some extremity.' The extremity which Beverningh foresaw was the abandonment of the line of the Yssel. The Prince of Orange had hitherto energetically opposed this. He writes to De Witt, 'The greatest disaster which could happen to the State would be the passage of the Yssel by the enemy,' and some days later he repeats the same declaration to Beverningh in equally forcible terms. He changed his mind as soon as the Rhine fortresses were besieged by the King of France. Without waiting to receive the news of their capitulation, he assembled a council of war to decide whether he should give up the defence of the river. The general officers, with the exception of Count Hornes, voted for abandoning the position; they pleaded the inadequacy of their forces, the extent of the line of defence, and the dangers of the retreat in case a passage was forced by the enemy. The deputies to the camp who were present with the army decided that no resolution ought to be taken till the matter had been referred to the members of the military commission of the States-General. They summoned the latter to Arnheim, where the Prince of Orange and Beverningh repaired to hear their opinion.

The Grand Pensionary was not satisfied with the instructions which the States had transmitted to their commissioners. Alarmed at the dispositions shown by the general officers, he wrote directly to Beverningh, urging upon him that he should combat their opinion, and not allow the plan of campaign to be altered. 'I calculate,' he writes, 'that you must have, with the last reinforcements sent to you, about 30,000 foot and horse,' including thus all the troops which had been despatched to the camp, and of which 4,500 had not yet joined the army of operation. 'Considering also the justice of our cause,' he continues, 'we may be encouraged in resolution and firmness, and may await with confidence the help of Almighty God. I venture, therefore, to hope that,

if the superior officers again offer pusillanimous advice and opinions, you will reject them without hesitation, and with marks of serious displeasure. You must not allow the proposal of abandoning the Yssel to penetrate into the camp to the subaltern officers and men; for, in my opinion, it would be more likely to weaken the army by demoralising it, than the important reliefs which you have already received and those which you will receive could strengthen it. I can assure you that the States of Holland are unanimously of opinion that the enemy must be awaited in front of the river, and stopped there by force. Such has long been the opinion of the States-General and of the States of all the provinces, and the expectation of all good citizens, as you will learn from the deputies who are starting for Arnheim.' The Grand Pensionary sums up thus the programme of defence in his report to the States: 'It is decided that we remain on the Yssel to live or die there.' The resolution of holding out there till the last extremity was therefore adopted without difficulty, and the commissioners of the States conveyed these instructions to the deputies at the camp, who, as well as the Prince of Orange, acquiesced in them.

The States-General approved the resolution of their commissioners, and informed the Prince of Orange of their determination to retain the line of the Yssel. Still, forced to take into consideration the disastrous events which were being hurried on, they would not restrain his freedom of action in case a retreat should appear to him necessary in consequence of the change of circumstances. They therefore authorised him to take, in case of necessity, and with the sanction of the deputies to the camp, any measures that might be called for by the progress of the enemy. De Witt, whose previous confidence was shaken by the surrender of the Rhine fortresses, had at length perceived that it might be necessary to recall the troops, in order to avert greater calamities. 'In the event of Almighty God continuing to try us, by allowing misfortune to approach us more nearly,' he writes to Beverningh, 'I could not do otherwise than think with you that the camp must be broken up.'

The army of the States-General was on the point of being reduced to this extremity by the forward march which the King of France had boldly hurried on with a success as complete as it was rapid. Having made himself master of all the Rhine fortresses that defended the two banks of the river, Louis XIV. had the choice of which direction he would take to advance into the enemy's country, by crossing one or the other arm of the river. Since quitting Maestricht, he had given up the idea of forcing his way across the Wahal, and could only pursue his conquests by deciding to cross either the Yssel, or that portion of the river that still retains the name of the Rhine, but lower down is called the Leck. He would thus open a way for himself either into Weluwe or Betuwe, which may be called the approaches to Holland.

By advancing towards the Yssel, where the Prince of Orange had concentrated his principal forces, Louis might overwhelm the hostile army by superior numbers, and meet no further resistance in his way. On the other hand, by advancing towards the Rhine he would find a river easier to cross than the Yssel, and less strongly defended; while, if he succeeded in effecting a passage, he would be established in the centre of the United Provinces, and might, if he pleased, take in the rear the fortresses of the Wahal before penetrating into the enemy's country, or hasten his forward march in order to cut off the retreat of the Prince of Orange's army. It was towards the Rhine, therefore, that Louis XIV. advanced; but he took care at the same time to threaten the Yssel by the despatch of a detachment, which, under the command of Count de Roys, approached Westerford, where the Prince of Orange had established his head-quarters. He thus disconcerted the plan of defence by concealing his real designs up to the last moment.

The States-General were still ignorant of the direction he intended to take. Since the French army had quitted Maestricht the most contradictory information had been given them. While the secretary of their embassy, Rompf, who had remained in Paris in spite of the war, told them,

at the very outset of the campaign, that the passage of the Rhine below the Wahal ought to be fortified, De Witt was persuaded that all the force of the attack would be concentrated on the Wahal against Nimeguen. The Rhyngrave, on the contrary, who was Governor of Maestricht, announced that the King of France was advancing towards the Yssel.

Notwithstanding the urgent advice of the Grand Pensionary, no watch had been kept over the enemy's movements. 'I cannot conceal from you,' he writes to Beverningh, 'that great astonishment is felt here at so little being known in your camp, considering that the events are taking place in Cleves, of which country Major-General Prince John Maurice of Nassau is stadtholder, whose inhabitants, without being hostile to France, are devoted to the State, and where hundreds of soldiers serving in the camp are peasants belonging to the soil, so that they might be sent by dozens wherever they are most wanted, and employed, under pretext of discussing the ransom of the prisoners, to carry messages to the King of France and his generals, by which means everything might be promptly and correctly known.'

The Prince of Orange was awaiting the enemy on the Yssel. Not only did the Yssel appear to him to be threatened by the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne, who were approaching it on the north with their troops under the command of Luxembourg, but he also expected to have to defend himself there against the attack of the French army. The passage of the Rhine did not enter into his calculations. He did not think that Louis XIV. would venture to attempt it, finding it defended at its two extremities by the fortress of Schenck and the fortified town of Arnheim, which would threaten him with a twofold attack. He did not, therefore, pay sufficient attention to that position, and, while disposing his troops along the Yssel, he imprudently neglected the right wing of his line of defence.

He had despatched there two regiments of infantry and two of cavalry, making an effective force of 1,000 foot and 600 horse, with a contingent of 500 peasants. This detachment was placed under the command of Count Montbas,

brother-in-law of Peter de Groot, a Frenchman by birth, who had been for a long time in the employment of the States. The Grand Pensionary having recommended him to Van Beuningen, on the occasion of a visit paid by Montbas to Paris for private business, Van Beuningen describes him 'as a man of courage and good behaviour, who in these times should rather be brought forward than kept at a distance.' His family connection with the republican party had caused him to incur the suspicion of the Prince of Orange, in spite of the attentions which he had constantly paid to the young son of William II. during his early years, when the latter often spent the evenings at his house, where games of cards were the principal amusement. In consequence of their hostility, Montbas had not been able to obtain the post of lieutenant-general of cavalry, but had been obliged to content himself with that of commissary-general. Suspected by the new captain-general of having wished to remain at the Hague in order to keep up a communication with the deputies of the States who were hostile to the Prince, and cause still closer restrictions to be put on his military powers, he had received abrupt orders to return to the camp, and remained there several days without employment before receiving his new command.

In offering no obstacle to the selection made by the councillor deputies who sent Montbas to the Rhine, the Prince of Orange evidently intended only to allow him a post of observation; if it had been a question of entrusting to him the defence of the chief position, he would not have failed to oppose his appointment. Moreover, the troops placed under the orders of Montbas were inadequate to repulse the enemy, as they consisted of scarcely sixteen hundred men for guarding six or seven fordable places, along a line extending three or four leagues, from Heussen to Tolhuys. Beverningh, therefore, writes to the States of Holland, 'It is a great mistake to suppose that the three or four regiments which have been given to Montbas will prevent the French army from crossing into the island of Betuwe.' The instructions of the latter, moreover, left him uncertain as to the manner in which he

was to employ his troops. The orders of the deputies were 'that he should always keep his eye on the town of Nimeguen, and that as soon as he should see the French approaching by water or land, he should enter the town for the purpose of defending it.' The orders of the Prince of Orange, less urgent, enjoined him 'to throw himself into Nimeguen, when that place should be invested and actually attacked.'

Uncertain, therefore, whether he was to take the initiative in effecting his retreat, or to await the attack of the French army before throwing himself into Nimeguen, Montbas requested explanations from the Prince of Orange, but received no answer. He then addressed himself to the deputies. 'In God's name,' he writes, 'send me positive and explicit orders, and let me have them speedily.' The deputies answered, 'After receiving yours of to-day, we beg to inform you that the Prince has undertaken to give you more positive orders; but as he is encumbered with business of all sorts, we apprise you that his Highness's intentions are in conformity with your orders of yesterday; that you should not wait to be attacked in your quarters and forced to retreat, but that on perceiving the approach of the enemy, and that the town of Nimeguen is in danger of being invested or besieged, you should march immediately on that place in order to defend it, making use of the powers conferred on you.'

In order to carry out his instructions, therefore, Montbas was to hold back and reserve himself for the defence of Nimeguen. But he must have been the more embarrassed as to his course of action, as on the very day on which the deputies to the camp wrote him this letter, Major-General Wurtz, who was inspecting the lines of defence, had sent for him, to inform him of the intended despatch of five regiments, three of which would be infantry, with 500 Spanish horse. The following day, Montbas, not finding these reinforcements at the appointed meeting-place, and suspecting the Prince of Orange of wishing him to be crushed by superior numbers, thought himself authorised to commence his retreat, which he did with unfortunate precipitation, by moving his infantry towards Nimeguen. He announced this to the deputies to the

camp in these terms: 'I have ordered the infantry to retire, and I remain with the cavalry, regretting extremely that I am forced to quit this post, which is so important to the State; if the enemy does not still press me too hard, I will hold out for some days longer.'

The last letter he received from Wurtz put an end to any hesitation as to the line of conduct he should pursue. The latter, while informing him tardily, though without giving him any precise orders to remain at his post, that 'the Prince of Orange had given the command of Nimeguen to Welderen, lieutenant-general of cavalry, thus sparing him that trouble,' explains to him, on the other hand, that the fear of an attack on the Yssel, consequent upon a false alarm, had caused a delay in the despatch of the reinforcements promised to him. He announces, moreover, that they will be reduced to three regiments, of which only one will be infantry, and in a post-script written the following night he adds that 'after having despatched these regiments on their way, the Prince of Orange now finds it necessary to recall them.'

Disheartened by this desertion, Montbas gave up all idea of disputing the passage with the hostile army if any attempt were made to force it. So long as he believed he had only a feigned attack to repulse, he did his duty. A detachment of two squadrons accompanied by a hundred dragoons, commanded by Saint Abre, had appeared in the neighbourhood of the Rhine, near Tolhuys, on June 10, and had imprudently ventured to cross the river, at the risk of giving the alarm. Montbas immediately ordered Soutland, colonel of one of the two regiments of cavalry under his command, to repulse the attack, while he went in search of his rear-guard of infantry, which had not got very far away. On his return he met Soutland, who was retreating on the premature intelligence of the passage of the whole of the French cavalry; he brought him hurriedly back with him, and forced the advance guard of the enemy to recross the Rhine. But unable to doubt any longer that the whole French army was assembled near Elten, and too easily convinced of the futility of resistance, he sent an express to announce his retreat to the Prince of Orange.

While his troops were continuing their march towards Nimeguen, he halted for a night's rest at Arnheim and then went on to head-quarters at Dieren, where he was arrested by order of the Prince of Orange, who in accusing him of treason hoped to be relieved from the blame which he might himself have incurred.

It was not, however, Montbas' more or less culpable abandonment of his post opened to the enemy an entrance into the country. The Prince of Orange was able to repair in time the consequences of the misconduct of which he accused him. He sent off Major-General Wurtz in all haste with the two regiments of cavalry whose despatch he had notified to Montbas, augmented by six other detached companies, and ordered him to take under his command Soutland's regiment of cavalry, which had been left behind. He further reinforced the division by Aylva's regiment of infantry, which Montbas had sent back to Nimeguen, and which received orders to return immediately. Finally he joined to it some companies belonging to the regiments that had been recalled from the Spanish Netherlands. Montbas' detachment was thus in part sent back to its cantonments, and received fresh reinforcements which might easily have been augmented by the recall of the garrisons of Nimeguen and Arnheim, whose co-operation would have been of material assistance to the defence. Instead of the 1,600 men to which Montbas had been reduced, for opposing the enemy, Wurtz had at his disposal 2,000 or 2,500. But the haste with which they were sent, ignorance of the positions to be occupied, the neglect that had prevented any entrenchments being thrown up, and above all the want of artillery, made them of very little avail for a serious effort of resistance.

The French army had placed itself in a position to cross the Rhine by a rapid concentration behind the hill of Elten. Before proceeding to take the last instructions of the King, who had advanced as far as Rees, Condé had ascertained from the spies who furnished him information, what parts of the river were now fordable. One of these fords was near a small town named Heussen; the other was opposite Tolhuys. At

Tolhuys, the river was a hundred and eighty metres wide, and could be forded, except for a space of about thirty to fifty metres. But the fordable passage, which was only a metre and a third deep, was narrow, and would not allow of more than five or six horsemen riding abreast.

Condé had reconnoitred the banks of the river himself the previous day, in order to ascertain what resistance might be expected, and now waited for Louis XIV. before giving his final instructions. The King of France having come up to him the same evening, after sending him notice of his arrival in a note written by his own hand, Condé disposed the army in order of battle. The right wing, entrusted to Foucault, extended towards Arnheim; the infantry, commanded by Saint Abre, remained in the centre; while the left wing, forming the advanced guard, drew near to Tolhuys. It was this passage which, by reason of the facility of approach and the bend of the river that enabled cannon to be placed so as to sweep the opposite shore, had been selected by Condé as the point of attack. The following day, Sunday, June 12, 1672, at daybreak, arrangements were made for setting up a bridge of boats under cover of a battery. Wurtz, who had succeeded Montbas, had no artillery with which to oppose it; he did not even attempt to disturb or retard the preparations for crossing the river by means of the toll-house, which was only furnished, it is true, with three brass guns, and occupied by a few soldiers armed with muskets.

Louis XIV. and Condé were, however, not perfectly confident of the success of their enterprise. Insufficiency of materials delayed the construction of the bridge, and the fire of the French battery, by giving the alarm to the Prince of Orange, who was encamped in the neighbourhood, might bring him in time to the assistance of his lieutenant. Impatient to begin the action, Louis XIV. had given orders to the dragoons on the right wing to attempt a crossing at the ford of Heussen. The rapidity of the stream and the fire of the enemy's detachment guarding the banks obliged them to retreat hastily. The King of France was now anxious that the ford of Tolhuys should be examined in the hope that an easier crossing might

be found there for the cavalry. Count de Guiche, eldest son of Marshal Grammont, who had accompanied Condé in his last reconnaissance and who commanded the advanced guard, offered his services for the purpose of ascertaining this.

De Guiche, who had incurred Louis's displeasure for having attempted to rival him in the affections of the Duchess of Orleans, was impatient to recover the royal favour by some brilliant exploit. He obtained as his guide a peasant named John Peterson, and, heedless of danger, exposed himself to the fire from the tower, and returned to pronounce the passage fordable. During his residence in Poland, he had often seen cavalry swim across the rivers with ease, and success was to justify his confidence. Condé, more prudent, hesitated to share it. Before running any risk he wished to form his own conclusion as to the chances in favour of the bold enterprise proposed to him, but ended by allowing himself to be convinced.

Orders to cross the river were conveyed by De Guiche to the first ten squadrons of Pilois' brigade, who were ranged in line, under cover of a row of willows which served to screen them. De Guiche was one of the first to plunge into the water, preceded by the gentlemen of his household. He was accompanied by some forty volunteers belonging to the most illustrious of the French nobility, and was followed by the first squadron of cuirassiers, commanded by Major Langallerie. Such was the haste that several horsemen, missing the ford, were carried away by the current and drowned. Those who reached the left bank were driven back into the river by the enemy's cavalry. Colonel la Leck's regiment, of which Wurtz had taken the command, advanced boldly into the water to stop the French advanced guard, and fired a murderous volley. About a hundred horsemen and volunteers were mortally wounded, amongst whom were Guitry, Grand Master of the King's Guard, Count Nogent, major-general and captain of the guard, and Count Rochefort Theobon. The ranks of the assailants were thus thrown into confusion which might have been fatal.

'It was still uncertain which would yield, the enemy or

ourselves,' writes Count de Guiche in the narrative of that day which he has left behind him. 'But the cavalry of the States, who had bravely commenced resistance, were unable to prolong it. Finding themselves unsupported by the regiments that had remained on the shore, they were forced to retreat before the five French squadrons which followed the advanced guard, under the orders of Count Revel, and which had formed themselves into a compact line to resist the current. Their advance was covered by the battery established on the right bank, which dispersed the enemy's horsemen, who had advanced into the river, and prevented them from re-forming on the bank. Without attempting to return to the charge they fell back in disorder on the infantry, while the two other regiments of cavalry who had not taken part in the action retired without fighting. 'It is said,' writes Beverningh to De Witt, 'that our troops stood pretty firm, but that they were not in a condition to support one another.'

A passage once forced, the French gendarmerie commanded by Soubise, and followed by the King's Household, crossed the river without any difficulty. At the same time the Prince of Condé, swimming his horses, crossed over in a boat with his son, the Duke d'Enghien, and his nephew, the Duke de Longueville. He was accompanied by several other nobles, MM. de Marsillac and de Bouillon, and the Marquis de Beringhen, the King's Master of the Horse. Having reached the opposite bank, he found himself face to face with the Dutch infantry, who, abandoned by the greater part of the cavalry, had entrenched themselves in a favourable position behind the ditches, hedges, and palings of the meadows, near a toll-house, about a thousand paces from the shore. Threatened with the onslaught of five or six thousand horsemen whom Condé could bring against them, and hemmed in by overwhelming forces, they were reduced to one regiment, that of Aylva, augmented by a few companies. They were standing immovable, ready to ask for quarter, when the volunteers advanced with impetuosity to the attack, with the Duke d'Enghien at their head. Condé tried in vain to stop them till he had received the reinforcements that were crossing

the river; he only caught them up within reach of the enemy's fire, and attempted to avert the consequences of their imprudence by summoning the Dutch infantry to lay down their arms on condition that their lives should be spared.

Carried away by the ardour of youth, and heated by wine, the Duke d'Enghien and the Duke de Longueville, followed by some of their companions in arms, rushed towards the inclosure which served the enemy as a fortified camp. The Duke de Longueville was the first to tear down one of the barriers, and with cries of 'Kill! kill!' levelled his pistol at the first man whom he found within shot. At that moment the Dutch infantry, resuming their arms, fired a volley at close quarters. The Duke de Longueville was the first victim, and the Chevalier de Marsillac was killed at his side. Other victims fell also: Tassé, nephew of Marshal de la Force, the Marquis d'Aubusson, the Marquis de Boury, the Marquis de Beauveau, and Brouilly, adjutant of the body-guard. In addition to these the Prince de Marsillac, eldest son of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, was severely wounded; Count Vivonne, Commander of the King's galleys, Beringhen, Master of the Horse, and the Marquis de Termes, were also disabled.

Condé himself, seeing his son and nephew engaged, had thrown himself into the *mêlée*. Having hitherto been spared in every battle-field, he here received his first wound; a pistol shot, fired by a Dutch officer named Ossembrok, fractured his left wrist. The assailants fell back, and Wurtz, making a final effort, brought back to the charge the two squadrons which he had been able to keep together, while the infantry, advancing, made ready for a second volley. The struggle was too unequal to be prolonged; the advanced guard of the French cavalry carried away by De Guiche and led by Count Revel, who received three sword wounds, advanced with all speed to the assistance of Condé and his volunteers. The enemy's cavalry gave way before them and took to flight, carrying away Wurtz in the rout; they penetrated through the ranks of the infantry, which they surrounded on all sides, and from which the Chevalier de Vendôme, who at the age of seventeen was serving his first campaign, captured a flag. Irritated by his

wound and exasperated by the death of his nephew, the young Duke de Longueville, Condé no longer made any efforts to spare these last combatants. They were soon at the mercy of their conquerors, and amongst those who survived the greater number were made prisoners: it was only with great difficulty that a few officers and the rest of the foot soldiers were able to escape through the fences.

The same evening the French infantry quietly crossed the river on a bridge of boats; they were followed by the artillery, and the military train, including seven or eight hundred waggons for provisions, while the cavalry, fearing a renewed attack on the part of the Prince of Orange, had remained in order of battle on the bank of the river, of which they had taken possession. The King, having sent for Turenne, who had remained at head-quarters at Rees, rejoined his troops on the other bank, and publicly embraced Count de Guiche, as a mark of his satisfaction at the happy audacity to which the success of the attack was due, addressing him besides in terms such as he knew so well how to use when he wished to captivate. He then proceeded to visit Condé, who had been conveyed to the house of a peasant, in order to inquire himself as to the wound that might endanger a health so precious to the State, 'and gave up the first few moments to the promptings of nature, and of the friendship and esteem which he had for the Prince.' Two hours later Condé recrossed the river in the boat in which he had previously crossed it, bearing with him the body of the Duke de Longueville, covered with a cloak, and received in a barn the envoys who, coming to offer his nephew the throne of Poland, found only a corpse before them. 'I cannot tell you,' he writes to his sister, 'how impatient I am to be near you, in the hope that my presence may in some measure soften your affliction. I protest to you that it is a thing I desire with extreme ardour, having never felt anything more deeply than this.'

Such was the passage of the Rhine, celebrated as one of the most glorious exploits of Louis XIV.'s reign, and which had not cost 200 men. The King, who had been on horseback for twenty-four hours without rest, issuing his orders for the

minutest details, might have claimed the success. He does not, however, assume to himself any merit in the narrative he has left behind him. 'I was present,' he says, 'at this passage, which was bold, vigorous, brilliant, and glorious for the nation.' France was proud of it on her King's account, and gave way to an enthusiasm which, a month later, was echoed in Boileau's celebrated epistle. 'To throw oneself into a great river, like dogs after a stag,' writes Madame de Sévigné, 'without being either drowned or cut down on landing, all this so entirely surpasses my imagination that it makes my head whirl.'

No doubt the passage of the Rhine was less bold and certainly less heroic than it was considered at that time, since it had scarcely been disputed; but it gave to the King of France none the less all the advantages of a great victory, by forcing the enemy to abandon without a battle the line of defence which might have arrested the invasion. When the Prince of Orange learnt that Louis had thus opened a way for himself into the territory of the United Provinces, he did not take advantage of the opportunity afforded him of attacking the French army. 'It might have been placed in the greatest danger,' as Count d'Estrades writes, 'because it was cut in two so long as the bridge of boats was not completed.' The Prince might therefore have hazarded a bold stroke, either by advancing to assail the enemy's cavalry on the left bank before it had entrenched itself, or by surprising the French infantry on the right bank. He appeared, it is true, disposed to adopt this energetic and perhaps rash measure, but he allowed himself to be too easily turned aside by persons who, as Wicquefort writes, 'were not possessed of so much courage or so much honour as himself.'

He could no longer hesitate in hastening a retreat which perhaps he had calculated upon since the capture of the frontier towns, and the anticipation of which would explain the inadequate measures he had taken for the defence of the Rhine. That river once crossed, the Yssel could no longer serve as a barrier against invasion, and it was necessary to take immediate steps for preventing the army being taken in the rear, at the risk of being overwhelmed without the power of

retreating. The Prince of Orange therefore thought himself authorised in making use of the full powers left him by the commissioners of the States-General in case of necessity, which had just been confirmed to him by the States of Holland. Orders were immediately issued by the Council of War for the removal of the camp. It remained to be settled which would be the best route to take, by sea or by land. The sea route was that of the Zuyder Zee, which would enable the army to fall back without difficulty on Holland. The land route was that of Utrecht, which the Prince of Orange preferred as being the shorter, so that the troops would not be exposed to the danger of being intercepted before reaching their place of embarkation at Kampen, and he hastened to give the signal for departure.

By abandoning the line of the Yssel, he kept under his command an army which, in spite of the inferiority of his forces, might still suffice to arrest the enemy. Though he had not as yet received the last reinforcements that had been despatched to him, he was sure of rejoining them in his retreat, and taking into account the losses, reckoned at 1,500, which the passage of the Rhine had cost him, he had at his disposal about 29,000 men. By agreement with the deputies to the camp, he only took with him 12,000 for the defence of Holland, thus separating himself from 16,000 or 17,000 men, 8,000 of whom he left in the fortified towns on the Yssel, while he employed the rest in strengthening the garrisons of Arnheim and Nimeguen.

It was the greatest mistake that could have been committed, and involved consequences far more fatal than the passage of the Rhine. The report of the deputies to the camp explains how this resolution was come to. Prince John Maurice of Nassau was the first to propose it. On the afternoon of June 12, he writes from head-quarters at Dieren to the deputies to the camp who were at Zutphen to announce the passage of the Rhine and the departure of the Prince of Orange, who had just gone to Arnheim. He represented to them the necessity of abandoning the entrenchment of the Yssel, so as not to be taken in rear by the enemy; he asks for

their instructions, and suggests to them that he should send the greater part of the regiments back to the towns, keeping with him only the remainder of the infantry and the cavalry, to be formed into a body capable of making a stand against the enemy. The deputies were in the greatest embarrassment; no instructions had been given them for such an extremity. They immediately gave orders for sending the artillery back to Utrecht, with the exception of the larger guns, which should be embarked at Kampen, and they distributed the infantry regiments amongst the different garrisons, with the exception of six which they left with the cavalry at the disposal of the Prince of Orange. They gave him information forthwith of this distribution, by the Quartermaster-General Moyse Pain et Vin. The Prince of Orange sent for them the same day to Dieren. He expressed to them his displeasure at not having been consulted, and to satisfy him they altered in accordance with his wishes the distribution of the garrisons destined for the defence of the fortified towns.

With regard to the reserve corps brought back by the captain-general, the latter contented himself with augmenting it by one regiment of infantry, but, on the other hand, detached from it three regiments of cavalry to be despatched to the forts on the Yssel. With the exception of the orders thus given for substituting certain regiments for others, the Prince of Orange now ratified the decision of the deputies to the camp. He consented thus to a considerable weakening of the army, dangerously reducing the last remaining forces of which the republic could dispose for her defence. But he had to serve his apprenticeship in war before becoming a great general, and the splendour of the military glory he acquired later cannot be obscured by the inexperience shown in his first attempts.

The dispersion of the army was the more disastrous, that the 16,000 or 17,000 men who had been detached from the main body, representing fifteen regiments of infantry and three of cavalry, remained for the greater part at the mercy of the enemy. In fact, the fortified places to which they were being sent were too far from the line of defence on which the

Prince of Orange was to fall back to be of any use in defending it. With the exception, moreover, of Arnheim and Nimeguen, these towns were for the most part ill-fortified and ill-provisioned, and the deputies to the camp did not deceive themselves as to the resistance they would be able to offer if taken in the rear by an army in possession of the country. In vain had Colonel Bampfield proposed to employ at any rate the three regiments of cavalry left behind by the Prince of Orange, 'to form with two or three regiments of infantry a flying column, which should be directed to keep the field and incessantly to annoy the enemy.' No steps were taken for organising this detachment, which might have done great service.

In this extremity the Grand Pensionary was not backward in his advice, with a view to preventing the commission of such fatal imprudence. In his daily correspondence with Beverningh, he had always recommended the direct retreat of the army upon Holland. In his opinion, 'it was impossible to retain all the fortresses; the main body of the army with its chiefs should therefore be brought back to Holland by the Zuyder Zee, while the greater part of the cavalry should be quartered on the frontiers of Brabant, which cover Holland and Zealand.' This was, according to him, the only means of making effectually a final effort at resistance. He had been careful to represent 'that the Province of Holland, after having worn itself out by every possible sacrifice for the service of the republic, without having retained any State militia for its own protection, had the right, as soon as the position was no longer tenable outside its borders, to employ all the forces of the Union for its own safety, the welfare of other provinces solely depending on its preservation.'

The patriotic advice of the Grand Pensionary met with insurmountable resistance from that provincial egoism which is the usual rock on which every Federal Government splits. The fear of being accused of using for the defence of Holland regiments subsidised by other provinces, prevented the deputies to the camp from bringing back the entire army, and the Prince of Orange did not venture to force them to do so,

because he shrank from a decision which might have deprived him of the support of the provinces whose good-will he was interested in obtaining. A letter from Louvois to Letellier puts this supposition beyond a doubt. 'The hostile army,' he writes, 'diminishes daily, as much from the state of alarm in which the troops are, as because each province reclaims those it has paid for to be employed in its own defence.' The occupation of the fortresses on the Yssel was, in fact, entrusted to the infantry regiments of Overyssel, Groningen, and Friesland, while the Prince of Orange only brought back, besides the cavalry, the regiments of Holland, Guelders, and Utrecht. The ruin of the republic was nearly being the consequence.

Orders for retreat once given, the reduced army corps under the Prince's orders moved first towards Arnheim, in order, if possible, to re-enter Betuwe and thus check the progress of the invasion. But the enemy's advanced guard was already in sight of the town, and it became necessary to cut the bridges hastily, in order to prevent the passage of the Leck. Leaving in the fortress of Arnheim the three last regiments of infantry recalled from the Netherlands, which had only joined him in his retreat, and of which he ought rather to have made a reinforcement for his main body, the Prince of Orange hastened his march upon Utrecht. He had to decide whether he would wait there to oppose the enemy with the available forces still remaining to him. The situation of the place and the disposition of the inhabitants did not appear to favour an attempt at resistance. The combined works of entrenchment and inundations for protecting the line of Utrecht, which had been vainly advised by De Witt, had remained incomplete. The inhabitants, resigning themselves to despair and fearing that they would not be spared by the victors if they defended themselves, would not even allow themselves to be defended. They announced that they would close the gates against the Prince of Orange, and would open them to the King of France, and in order to remain masters of the town, they had seized the keys from the magistrates. When the army approached they refused to allow it to enter, and only consented to provision it.

The States-General, who had foreseen this state of affairs, had taken alarm and appeared inclined to recall into Holland the troops that had been brought away from the camp. But the deputies who represented the Province of Utrecht in the Federal Assembly, Van Weede and Van der Hoolk, urged that it was not advisable to trust to news which might or might not be authentic, declaring that in any case it would be easy to inspire other sentiments in the citizens. To satisfy them, the States-General merely authorised the recall into Holland of the artillery and militia companies, of which the greater part were in the pay of the towns of that province, and determined that the army should remain in cantonment at Utrecht, unless the deputies to the camp, to whom they gave full powers, should consider that it might be more usefully employed. On receipt of the report in which the latter announced that the troops would not be admitted into the town, the States-General, overruling the representations made them by the deputies of Utrecht, forthwith transmitted to the Prince of Orange orders to retreat.

The very day on which this resolution was voted at the Hague, the town of Utrecht had assumed an entirely different attitude. The populace were indignant at the weakness of the burghers. When they saw the artillery depart, they could contain themselves no longer, and began to utter threats. The States of the Province, in obedience to this impulse, invited the Prince of Orange with his staff and the deputies to the camp to a conference on the subject of the defence of the town. The burghers armed themselves, and, with noisy enthusiasm succeeding to their previous hostility, received him with acclamations. This revulsion of opinion influenced the deliberations of the States of the Province, and on the evening of June 16, after protracted discussions, they determined upon resistance. The Prince of Orange gave assurances that on the following day his troops should take up their position along the canal and the dyke that protected the town. 'If this town is resolved to behave courageously,' writes Beverningh to the States-General, 'I imagine it is not your intention

that we should abandon it to extremities.' The decision of the Council of War was adjourned till the return of the commissioners who proceeded to the Hague for fresh instructions.

In order to gain time, the Prince of Orange, who wished to defend the town in the hope of arresting the progress of the enemy, repaired, the following morning, to the Assembly of the States of Utrecht. He demanded that the suburbs should be destroyed or burnt and the fortified dyke cut, in order to render the approach to the town inaccessible. The States of Utrecht, in consequence of the hesitation of the deputies of the town, could not resolve upon this sacrifice, and would only consent to the flooding of a portion of the country. The Prince of Orange and the deputies to the camp being now relieved from all uncertainty, at once made known their now irrevocable determination of hastening their departure, in spite of the remonstrances and lamentations addressed to them by the States of Utrecht. They thus rendered the republic a service which contributed to save her from destruction.

The States-General, on their side, had done nothing but shilly-shally. On receiving Beverningh's letter informing them that the town of Utrecht had come to the determination to resist, they had hesitated to abandon it. But after hearing the last report of the deputies to the camp, they renewed their first instructions, by which they had given the latter full powers to stop or continue the retreat; though from their refusal to give any orders for detaining the army, they appeared rather to desire its speedy return to Holland. To please the States of the Province of Utrecht, however, by an apparent concession, they sent a messenger to the Prince of Orange by night, commissioned to assure him that they did not mean by this to prejudice his decision in any way. The messenger did not reach Utrecht till the army, which had started at daybreak, June 18, was already at some distance. The States-General could not but approve the action of the Prince of Orange in thus taking the initiative. In announcing to his brother the departure of the troops, the

Grand Pensionary justifies this retreat by the refusa to destroy the suburbs of the town.

An attempt to employ the last remnants of the army for the preservation of Utrecht would only have served to complete the ruin of the republic, without the gain of any advantage by this line of defence, which would have opened a way to the enemy on all sides. Holland alone could serve as an entrenchment against invasion. It was, therefore, the States of that Province who decided on the last halting-places of the army of the Prince of Orange. They assigned to it positions protecting the frontiers of their territory, which it occupied in five separate detachments.

According to the letter written by the Grand Pensionary to his brother, the army only consisted now of 'seven imperfect regiments, whose numbers did not exceed 4,000 or 4,500 foot and 5,000 horse.' We must not, however, trust implicitly to this statement, made during hours of anguish as to the fate of the country. According to statements derived from the letters of the commanders of each detachment, the seven regiments of which De Witt speaks were only the infantry regiments, and these were supplemented by twelve or fourteen regiments of cavalry, more or less incomplete. Moreover, to the troops reckoned by De Witt at 9,500 men should be added the Spanish cavalry, numbering 1,650 horse, and the greater part of the militia companies which had been brought back from the camp. But under any circumstances the united forces scarcely amounted to 12,000 men, of which 6,700 were cavalry, 4,500 infantry, and about 800 or 900 militia. This was the last body of reserve that remained to be opposed to the invasion.

The posts on which depended the safety of Holland were so skilfully chosen as to make up for inadequacy of numbers. The divisions entrusted with their defence comprised regiments both of infantry and cavalry, reinforced by the Spanish squadrons. On the south, Major-General Wurtz was sent with 2,700 men to Gorcum, or Gornichen, which connected the frontiers of Holland with Bois-le-Duc and other fortresses of North Brabant. On the north, Prince John Maurice of Nassau,

at the head of 2,000 men, was entrusted with the defence of the post of Muyden, which covered Amsterdam. In the centre the Marquis de Louvignies, who commanded the Spanish cavalry, occupied the post of Schoonhoven with 1,500 men, having the detachment of Wurtz on his right. On his left, Count Hornes, with 1,300 or 1,400 men, took up his quarters near Gouda. Finally the principal position which connected all the others, that of Nieuwerbrug, between Woerden and Bodegrave, was reserved for the Prince of Orange, who had at his disposal the largest part of the troops, commanded under him by Count Zuylestein. They consisted of 3,600 men, of which 1,400 were infantry, and he could thus either reinforce any of the defensive positions or himself assume the offensive. The militia companies were distributed amongst the various detachments, many of them being assembled at head-quarters. The battle-field was thus narrowed, and became a vast entrenched camp defended by five bastions, where a last refuge was reserved for the independence of the United Provinces.

At sea, the fortune of war was more favourable to the republic, and enabled her to avert the dangers of a naval invasion, which would have brought about inevitable ruin. The junction of the two hostile fleets, which could not be prevented, secured to the enemy the superiority in naval forces. The English fleet numbered 105 sail, of which sixty-five were ships of war or frigates, and sixteen fire-ships, carrying 3,376 guns and 22,442 men. The French fleet comprised sixty-seven sail, of which thirty were ships of war, five frigates, and eight fire-ships, and carried 1,784 guns and 10,744 men. They were divided into three squadrons, of which the two English, called squadrons of the red and of the blue, were commanded, the first by the Duke of York, Lord High Admiral of England, the second by Vice-Admiral Montagu, Earl of Sandwich. The French squadron, called squadron of the white, which had put to sea in the month of April, was under the command of Count d'Estrées, Vice-Admiral of France, assisted by Duquesne as Lieutenant-Admiral.

The fleet of the United Provinces, even including all the galiots, one of which had been put at the disposal of the celebrated marine painter, Van der Welde, did not exceed 133 sail, of which sixty-one were ships of war, fourteen frigates, and thirty-six fire-ships. They carried 4,484 guns, were manned by 20,738 sailors and 5,500 marines, and were divided into three squadrons. The Admiral-in-Chief, Ruyter, had reserved for himself that of the centre, while the right and left wings were commanded by Lieutenant-Admirals van Ghent and Banckert. Cornelius de Witt represented the States-General on board the Admiral's ship, and in accordance with his wishes, no other commissioners had been associated with him.

The expedition to the mouth of the Thames attempted by the squadron of Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent against the English ships that had taken refuge there, not having had the success which might have cast lustre on the opening of the campaign, there remained only one step to be taken, an advance against the two allied fleets, which had met at Portsmouth. Cornelius de Witt was impatient for battle. 'In my opinion nothing better can be done,' he writes to his brother, 'than to tempt the fortune of war (the sooner the better), as soon as I consider that an engagement can take place without prejudice to the State and with a chance of success, leaving the issue to Almighty God.' He begged, however, for orders, not wishing to expose himself, in the event of a failure, to the accusation of having rashly hazarded the forces of the State, and he declared himself ready to carry out his instructions exactly, even to the sacrifice of his life. John de Witt wrote back to his brother congratulating him on being willing to advance against the enemy, and thanking God for the courage and firmness he displayed. The States-General, after hesitating to give him authority to attack, ended by leaving him full powers, and the Grand Pensionary encouraged him to make use of them promptly.

For more than a week the Dutch fleet sailed in search of the hostile squadrons for the purpose of forcing an attack. They had thus time to receive the last reinforcements they

could hope for, in default of the eighteen reserve ships which were not yet equipped. Daring volunteers belonging to the first families in the land, Hasselaar of Amsterdam, Van Berg of Naarden, and Heemskerke, nephew of Van Beuningen, profited by this delay to join the fleet; they had equipped at their own expense a number of sailors, and were determined to distinguish themselves by brilliant exploits. The pursuit of the enemy was continued without interruption. 'If God grant us the continuation of a favourable wind,' writes Cornelius de Witt to his brother in terms of antique simplicity, 'I hope that we shall be at work soon, and I pray that success may favour us for the maintenance of our liberty and the honour of the State.'

The allied fleets had no expectation of being attacked. They had anchored at Solebay, on the east coast of England, between Harwich and Yarmouth, and after disembarking some of the crews who had been attacked with illness, were completing their stores, with the view of making a descent upon the coast of Holland. Notwithstanding the warnings given to the Duke of York by the Earl of Sandwich, they were not in order of battle, and were only preparing to celebrate the birthday of the King of England. On Tuesday, June 7, 1672, at daybreak, the French captain De Cogolin, who was on the lookout, was the first to perceive the fleet of the States-General, and gave the alarm. The confusion was such, that several of the English ships were obliged to cut their cables in order to place themselves in line. But the wind, which had moderated, delayed the attack, and the surprise to which all Ruyter's measures had been directed was thus baulked.

In the presence of the enemy, Ruyter exhorted the naval force under his command valiantly to do their duty; he represented warmly to the principal officers whom he had summoned on board his ship, the importance of the action which was about to take place. 'The safety of the country, the liberty of the United Provinces, the fortunes and the lives of their inhabitants depended,' he declared, 'on this battle, and only the valour of the crews could secure the republic against the unjust violence of the two kings who were attacking her.' The

order of battle, as arranged, opposed Lieutenant-Admiral Banckert to Count d'Estrées, and Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent to Vice-Admiral Montàgu, on the two wings. Ruyter, who with Cornelius de Witt was on board the 'Seven Provinces,' assisted by Lieutenant-Admiral van Nès, retained the central position facing the squadron of the red, commanded by the Duke of York, who was on board the 'Royal Prince.' He himself gave the signal for the battle about eight o'clock in the morning, by advancing to attack the commander-in-chief of the hostile fleet, after pointing him out to his chief pilot, Zegen, to whom he said only these words, 'That is our man.' The pilot, lifting his cap, replied unconcernedly, 'Admiral, you shall have him,' and steered the 'Seven Provinces' straight for the 'Royal Prince.' The two ships attacked each other furiously for more than an hour, and continued the fight in the midst of a thick smoke which wrapped them in obscurity. About nine o'clock, the main mast of the English flag-ship fell with its red standard, and, had it not been for the calm, the vessel would have been in danger of being run into by fire-ships. Fearing that she would soon be disabled, the Duke of York made up his mind to abandon her, stepped into a boat through the port-hole of his cabin, was rowed across the front of the enemy's line, and transferred his flag to the 'Saint Michael.' This ship also was so disabled before the close of the day, that the Duke of York was forced to transfer his flag to the 'London,' where he courageously continued the engagement. Around the 'Seven Provinces' the battle raged furiously, and no sooner had the 'Royal Prince' been forced to retreat than she was replaced by other vessels which surrounded the Admiral's ship with a circle of fire, without, however, being able to approach her, or to silence her guns.

The other ships belonging to Ruyter's squadron were also engaged. His son, Captain Engel de Ruyter, who from the age of fifteen had bravely accompanied him on all his expeditions, nearly lost his ship, which was struck by six shots and had three guns disabled; he himself received a wound in the chest, which for three days placed his life in danger. Lieu-

tenant-Admiral van Nès, after firing into the enemy for two hours, was forced to withdraw from the fight, one of the ships of his squadron, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Palms, having been boarded; as soon as he was able to extricate himself, he made up for lost time by attacking the 'Royal Catherine,' of eighty guns, commanded by Captain John Chicheley. He despatched one of his fire-ships towards the hostile vessel, at the same time firing a broadside into her. The fire-ship was kept off, and was nearly being driven against Van Nès' ship. But the 'Royal Catherine,' beginning to sink, was forced to surrender. Van Nès despatched two ships to sink or burn her, after receiving her crew on board. His instructions were badly carried out, and while the victors were busy pillaging, they allowed the English ship to be retaken and she escaped from their hands.

On the left wing, the fight that had been begun between Banckert and Count d'Estrées was not continued by the French squadron. After a first engagement, the latter withdrew towards the south for the purpose of getting out into the Channel, and was pursued by Banckert, who annoyed them with continuous firing, but was not able to approach near enough to cut off their retreat. The King of France had contented himself with making his ships spectators of the fight, in order to allow the two great maritime powers to exhaust their naval forces, without doing any injury to his own.

On the right wing, the battle waged furiously on either side. Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent fell upon the squadron of the blue with such impetuosity, that he threw terror and confusion into their midst; but he was stopped in his hasty career by a cannon ball which put an end to his life. His squadron, not receiving the expected signal, did not continue their advance. But, orders to conceal his death having been given to the Captain of Marines, Panhuys, who had gone to announce it to Ruyter and Cornelius de Witt, his flag was kept flying and the fight was resumed with increased obstinacy, the chief effort being directed against the English Vice-Admiral, Montagu, Earl of Sandwich, who was on board the 'Royal James.'

The first attack was made upon him by Captain van Brakel, who in the last war against England had taken the chief part in the victory of Chatham, and who was impatient to distinguish himself by some fresh exploit. Separating himself from Ruyter's squadron in defiance of discipline, and carried away by his rash valour, he was not afraid to measure his strength against a ship of 102 guns, manned by 900 sailors, although he had only to oppose to her a vessel armed with 72 guns and a crew of 300 men. Having approached her without replying to her guns, he threw out his grappling irons and fired a broadside into her. The two ships remained locked together, and their crews were mingled in a hand-to-hand fight. When Vice-Admiral Montagu succeeded by desperate efforts in disengaging himself, after a fight lasting an hour and a half, he was no longer in a condition to resist a fresh onset. He succeeded, however, in sinking three fire-ships which were advancing to destroy him. But being attacked by Vice-Admiral Sweers, who had succeeded Van Ghent in the command of the squadron, he could not prevent another Dutch fire-ship approaching him, under cover of the enemy's guns; she was commanded by Van de Ryn, the bold captain who had broken the chains of the 'Rochester' in the expedition of Chatham. The 'Royal James,' whose powder had been wetted by the leaks she had sprung, was forthwith reduced to ashes and burnt without blowing up. The sailors and soldiers on board threw themselves into the sea, where they were nearly all drowned. The captain, though wounded, and the lieutenant, were saved and conducted as prisoners on board Ruyter's ship, where they received honourable treatment. Vice-Admiral Montagu shared the fate of his ship; the boat in which he had attempted to escape with his son being overcrowded by the numbers who jumped into it, became waterlogged and sank beneath the waves.

The centre squadron, after being the first to open the battle, had borne the brunt of it longest. Ruyter and Van Nès fought ceaselessly till evening against the squadron of the red, still commanded by the Duke of York, who continued to fight obstinately. Having lost sight of Admiral

Banckert, who was pursuing the French ships, and being separated from his lieutenant-admiral Van Nès, whose way was stopped by superior forces, and rashly abandoned by Captain van Brackel, Ruyter no longer had any vessels with him but a yacht and the frigate commanded by Captain Philip d'Almonde. This isolation had nearly proved fatal to him. Having been joined by one of the divisions of the squadron of the blue, the Duke of York attempted to cut off his retreat by making the English ships lie-to round the 'Seven Provinces,' against which he directed his fire-ships, driven on by a favourable wind. Ruyter had no boats with which to defend himself from their formidable approach, his own having been sunk. He saw himself threatened with the same fate to which Vice-Admiral Montagu had fallen a victim, when the commander of the yacht and the captain of the frigate who were with him resolved to sacrifice themselves to save him. They advanced towards the fire-ships, one of which ran into the frigate, but the fire was only smouldering, and Captain d'Almonde had time to disengage himself. The commander of the other English fire-ship, perceiving that the one that preceded him was in flames, lost courage, and did not venture to carry out the orders that had been given him. His lieutenant-admiral having at length forced his way through the squadron of the red, and come up to him, Ruyter had no longer any cause for fear. The division of the squadron of the blue which had surrounded him, finding itself in danger of being caught between two fires, retired at full speed, and the indefatigable Van Nès, having extricated the admiral's ship, went to the assistance of his brother, Rear-Admiral John van Nès, who was still engaged on the right wing with the last division of the squadron of the blue, which had remained in line of battle after Vice-Admiral Montagu's disaster. He succeeded in dispersing them, and thus gloriously ended the fight. Night coming on prevented the victory being followed up. The retreat of the English squadrons would have been changed into flight if Lieutenant-Admiral Banckert, who had drawn away too far in pursuit of the French squadron had been able to come up with the fleet before evening.

The engagement had lasted no less than twelve hours. Ruyter declared that 'he had never before taken part in so desperate and prolonged a battle.' His own ship had consumed 25,000 pounds of powder, and fired 2,500 shots. The lieutenant of the 'Royal James,' brought on board as a prisoner, himself paid tribute to his boldness and vigilance. 'He is at once,' he said, 'admiral, captain, pilot, sailor, and soldier; he is everything in one.'

The courage shown by Cornelius de Witt was no less worthy of admiration. Ill, suffering from rheumatic pains in his arms and legs, but triumphing by the strength of his mind over bodily weakness, he took his place close to Ruyter near the helm. Incapable of standing, he had a chair brought to him bearing the arms of the republic, and sat there, as if in the seat of government, to give the signal of command and to share at the post of honour the dangers of the crew. In order to represent with dignity the sovereignty of the States-General, whose delegate he was, he was escorted by twelve guards carrying halberds; three fell wounded at his feet, three more were killed, and their bodies thrown into the sea. Careless of the balls that were falling round him, having already dedicated his life to the service of his country, he remained calm and immovable on the deck till the close of the day. Writing to his brother, at five o'clock the following morning, to give him an account of the battle, he concludes his letter in these words, which give some notion of his indomitable energy: 'I am of opinion that we should begin again as soon as possible; I hope God will grant us the strength necessary for continuing to the death to do service to my dear country.'

The losses sustained by the enemy suffice to prove the success of the States-General. Their fleet had disabled the flag-ship commanded by the Duke of York, destroyed the vessel of Vice-Admiral Montagu, set on fire an eighty-gun ship and sunk two others, with the loss on their own side of only two frigates and most of their fire-ships; 2,500 men and eighteen captains had been killed or wounded on board the English fleet, without counting a great number of

prisoners. England and the United Provinces had lost two great warriors, Montagu, Earl of Sandwich, and Van Ghent. Both were solemnly interred with the honours that were their due, the former in Westminster Abbey, the latter in the Cathedral of Utrecht beneath the marble mausoleum erected to him at the expense of the republic.

The States-General and the States of Holland received from the Grand Pensionary the news conveyed in Cornelius de Witt's despatches, announcing the successful result of the battle of Solebay. After transmitting them in all haste to the Prince of Orange and the deputies at the camp, they hastened to send messages of congratulation and encouragement to Ruyter and to the Grand Pensionary's brother. 'We cannot refrain,' write the States-General to Cornelius de Witt in a despatch signed by Mauregnault, President of the Assembly, and the Secretary, Gaspard Fagel, 'from notifying to you by these presents our particular satisfaction at the manly courage, the great valour, and the vigilant solicitude displayed by you in the battle against the enemies of the State, and we rejoice in expressing to you all our pleasure.' The same day the States of Holland addressed to Cornelius de Witt the following letter: 'We have learnt with extreme satisfaction the admirable manner in which you have made use of the vessels of the States for the purpose of fighting the hostile fleets; we express to you our praises by these presents, and we pray you to continue in the same path for the good of the country.' These were the last expressions of gratitude he was to receive from his country.

A fresh battle was nearly being fought, by which the republic might have gained a victory that would have made her mistress of the seas. Cornelius de Witt and Ruyter were desirous of taking advantage of the separation of the two allied fleets to strike a final blow. On the night immediately following the battle, therefore, the Dutch fleet of a hundred sail boldly pursued the English ships. The next day, June 8, at daybreak, they came up with them, and were preparing to overwhelm them by superiority of numbers, when the approach of the French fleet destroyed their hopes. Ruyter,

however, was determined to offer battle; but a thick fog, which hid the enemy from him, placed a fresh obstacle in the way of the success of the enterprise which he vainly persisted in attempting. The Council of War did not dare allow him to venture so far from the coast till he had laid in fresh stores, and ordered him to anchor on the coast of Zealand, in sight of the large island of Walcheren, while several smaller ships were to remain at sea to watch the movements of the enemy.

The Grand Pensionary hastened to respond to his brother's appeal, by hurrying on the equipment of reinforcements and the despatch of ammunition. Within three days the States of Holland forwarded to their fleet 9,000 cannon balls, and 100,000 pounds of powder. That the service of supplies might not be delayed, the States-General on their side prevailed on the directors of the East India Company to place at the disposal of the fleet all the reserves of powder in their magazines, and engaged to return the same amount out of the first deliveries made by the State arsenals. Van Beuningen, besides, received orders to purchase or borrow for the service of the navy any supplies of powder which he might be able to procure in the Spanish Netherlands.

The disasters of the land forces, the passage of the Rhine and the rapid progress of the French invasion, made these fresh preparations for naval armament useless. Contrary to the advice of the deputies of Enckhuyzen, which was considered too bold, the States of Holland represented to the States-General the rashness of risking a fresh battle, and informed Cornelius de Witt of the sad extremity to which they were reduced. The Grand Pensionary therefore wrote to his brother 'that they must be satisfied with watching over the arrival of the ships from the Indies, whose capture would be a terrible blow for the State, and must be careful for the present not to send away the fleet or expose it to a fresh encounter with the enemy.' Cornelius de Witt, however, still continued to exercise his functions as Commissioner of the States on board the flag-ship till the increase of his rheumatic and gouty pains, triumphing over his will, had deprived him of the power

of movement. Ruyter, who had never ceased to live with him on terms of brotherly affection and cordial friendship, as he testified publicly a few weeks later, would have liked to retain him at his side, in order to profit by his advice, but the States-General, informed of his illness, sent him permission to come on shore in order to take measures for his cure.

Borne down by suffering, Cornelius de Witt hastened to profit by the leave granted him; he went on board a galiot, escorted by two frigates, and accompanied by his guard of sailors and soldiers, and had himself conveyed to Dordrecht. In compliance with the urgent request of the deputies of the town, who were in fear of being attacked by the French army, he had prevailed on Ruyter to place at their disposal three thousand pounds of powder as a loan which they undertook to return. By way of compensation he refused to allow the artillery salute due to him as Commissioner of the States to be fired when he quitted the flag-ship, and would not consent to any expenditure of ammunition being made in his honour. Two days later he returned to his native town, where his wife was anxiously awaiting him. He was impatient to hasten his cure in order to place himself once more at the service of his country, hoping to enjoy his well-earned repose in his own home, and little foreseeing that in recompense for the glorious services which had already ruined his health, the barbarous ingratitude of his fellow-citizens was to cost him his life.

The increasing necessity for employing the naval stores and troops for defence on land made a fresh naval expedition impossible. The States of Holland, therefore, after the return of Cornelius de Witt, made up their minds to demand of the States-General that the fleet should be reduced one-third, leaving only forty-eight ships and eighteen frigates at sea; and this proposal was agreed to. Notwithstanding, however, the disarmament by which it was followed, the battle of Solebay had saved the republic. Not only did it leave intact all her naval resources and permit the States-General to employ them in the defence of their territory, but it had also obliged the allied fleets to withdraw, and had thus rendered impracticable the schemes for a descent whose object was to bring Zealand under

English domination. It had therefore prevented France and England from overwhelming the United Provinces beneath the weight of a double invasion which must have destroyed their independence. If matters came to the worst, the fleet would now offer an inviolable shelter to the inhabitants of the republic.

The United Provinces appeared, nevertheless, on the eve of being conquered. Whilst the King of France, after the passage of the Rhine, was advancing without opposition to the very frontiers of Holland, the Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster were seizing upon Overyssel as an easy prey. With the contingent of 6,000 men, commanded by Luxembourg, which the King of France had placed at their disposal, they were able to send 20,000 men into the field, to whom the Bishop of Münster had added a large force of artillery and some howitzers which hitherto had not been employed in siege warfare. The Bishop himself commanded his troops, while the Elector of Cologne, whose great age precluded him from taking part in the campaign, was represented by the Bishop of Strasburg. The inroad of the enemies' troops into Overyssel through the territory of the Count of Bentheim met with no opposition. It had been impossible to arm the militia of that province, the command of which had been entrusted to Aylva. Internal divisions, which no sooner pacified were constantly breaking out again, prevented the States of the Province, who were assembled at Campen, from coming to any decision, and favoured the progress of the enemy, who, according to Wicquefort, 'found accomplices in a portion of the nobility and amongst some of the magistrates of the towns, who were anxious for a change of government, which would prevent their treachery being discovered.' Moreover, on the farther side of the Yssel there was no fortress to defend the frontier, and all the small towns which were without garrisons submitted one by one, on condition that they should be preserved from pillage. Even the town of Grolle scarcely made an attempt at resistance, although possessing all the means of defence in its ramparts, furnished with cannon, and its garrison of 800 men. No sooner had the bombardment commenced than the inhabitants, wild with terror, forced the commandant, Tongeel,

to demand from the besiegers free egress for his troops, which was granted him. The Bishop of Münster continued his march on Borkelo, Lockem, and Deutichem, of which he easily made himself master.

These first successes, accompanied by the news of the passage of the Rhine by the French army, and followed by the retreat of the troops withdrawn into Holland by the Prince of Orange, encouraged the Bishop of Münster to cross the Yssel, which was no longer defended, and to attempt a more difficult exploit, that of laying siege to Deventer. This town was in a position to resist. 'I have good hopes for it,' writes Beverningh to De Witt. Besides being well fortified, it had a numerous garrison, consisting of 1,500 regular soldiers, eight companies of burghers, and 1,400 peasants, under the command of Colonel Dierick Stecke, governor of the fortress. A determined resistance would have forced the besiegers to retire. They were already divided among themselves. The Duke of Luxembourg could no longer keep on terms with the Bishop of Münster, whose obstinacy wore out his patience, and the Bishop of Strasburg was not much more inclined to continue the campaign with his exacting ally. 'He only asks to be allowed to withdraw his troops,' writes Luxembourg, 'and to leave M. de Münster to carry out alone the visions with which his head is filled.'

The besieged, however, betrayed by their magistrates, were not in a position to take advantage of the rivalries between the besiegers. In vain did the townspeople, more courageous here than elsewhere, show a bold determination to defend themselves. The selfishness of the magistrates, who would not allow their country houses on the opposite side of the Yssel to be destroyed, gave the enemy a shelter for setting up their batteries. Moreover, the destruction of the bridge of boats, and the obstacles opposed to its reconstruction by the burgomaster, Nielandt, who was in league with the Bishop of Münster, deprived the garrison of the power of making sorties. Finally, the weakness of the governor, whom the bombardment caused to forget his forty-seven years of military service, rendered useless the gallant efforts made by the troops and

the burgher companies to save the fortress. It was resolved, in spite of the opposition of three members of the magistracy, to despatch commissioners to arrange a capitulation. The negotiators announced on their return that, on condition of the union of the town to the Empire under the joint government of two German princes, they had obtained a promise of the free exercise of the reformed religion and the retention of their magistrates, as well as respect for private property. No guarantee was demanded on behalf of the garrison, who with the exception of the superior officers were to remain prisoners of war. The councillor Bochkolt, indignant at this cowardly surrender, refused to ratify the capitulation, and called the burghers and soldiers to arms. With courage equal to his own they resolved to continue the defence; and to prevent the possibility of further treachery they attempted to secure the person of the burgomaster, Nielandt, who escaped them by a hasty flight. This bold attempt at resistance was baffled by the magistrates and superior officers. Satisfied with the advantages conceded to them, they took measures to prevent the rising being effectual, and during the night opened the gates of the town to the enemy.

The fatal example sent by Deventer was followed by Zwolle, where a successful defence seemed certain, with a garrison composed of five companies of cavalry and two regiments of infantry, commanded by two resolute officers, Colonels Bampfield and Ripperda, in whom the States had, with good reason, perfect confidence. Suspecting that negotiations had been entered into with the enemy, and not choosing to be their victims, the two colonels repaired to the Town Hall in order to ascertain the intentions of the magistrates. The latter, perceiving their approach, sent away the messenger by a side door, while the two officers came in by another entrance. Finding glasses on the table of the audience chamber, Bampfield and Ripperda suspected that a secret conference had taken place. When invited to drink they declared that they had other things to think of, and that the question of the moment was of fighting. Instead of responding to their appeal, the

magistrates urged them to abandon the outposts, and to withdraw their regiments into the town. The colonels, whose suspicions were thus confirmed, demanded of them an engagement not to treat with the enemy without their consent. The only promise they could obtain was a guarantee of liberty to all who should sign the capitulation. Having no longer any doubt that a surrender was now imminent, and being determined to escape the fate of the garrison of Deventer, Bampfield and Ripperda decided on retiring during the night with their troops, in order to preserve them for the service of the republic, and proceeded to join the detachment with which Aylva was defending the entrance into Friesland. The magistrates of Zwolle had now no difficulty in forcing the inhabitants to surrender the town. To relieve themselves of all responsibility towards the States-General, they made the precipitate departure of the garrison an excuse for the capitulation which they had previously decided upon.

Their understanding with the enemy was so fully concerted that they had despatched a messenger with a circular in which the secretary of the States of Overyssel, Rocklinck, usurping the authority that belonged to that assembly, invited all the towns of the province to make their submission. The colonels, in their retreat, intercepted the letter addressed to the magistrates of Steenwick, and thus obtained proof of the plot. All the towns hastened to respond to this appeal by sending deputies to Zwolle, with full powers to acknowledge the supremacy of the enemy, under the same conditions as had been offered to the inhabitants of Deventer.

By the following day every town in the province except the fortress of Ommen had acknowledged the sovereignty of the Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster. Van Arkel, commandant of that town, and his officers, though they had only 200 men under them, were prepared to take advantage of the favourable situation of the fortress to defend themselves to the last extremity ; but their soldiers, on hearing that the other towns had surrendered, mutinied and demanded to be allowed to leave the fort. The flag, which they wished to take with them, was saved from them only with great difficulty, and the

officers, forced to take flight in all haste, withdrew to Friesland, with the exception of the commandant, who remained a prisoner.

In order to obtain formal possession of the province, the Bishop of Münster, who wished to keep it for himself, had commissioned two negotiators to treat with the nobles who represented the country districts. His overtures were favourably received, and the nobles referred the question to a committee, of which Rocklinck was made a member. The question of separating Overyssel from the United Provinces being put before them, they gave their consent, after obtaining the guarantees promised them for the exercise of the reformed religion, the payment of the debts of the province and the levy of taxes, but without being able to obtain the preservation of their private rights of jurisdiction. Notwithstanding the refusal of some of the members of the nobility, the treaty was concluded accordingly with the reservation that it should not be made public.

The King of France, however, would not allow it to be carried out. He reserved to himself the division of the conquered province, in spite of the discontent of the Bishop of Münster, whose demands and exactions had worn out his patience, and put a garrison of his own into Hassen, as well as into Kampen, which gave him access to the Zuyder Zee. He restored Deventer to the Elector of Cologne, left Zwolle in common to the two princes, and only bestowed on the Bishop of Münster Groll and Breevort, adding as compensation a diamond cross worth 25,000 crowns. He would only promise the Bishop to abandon to him the other towns which he already occupied or might conquer before the end of the campaign. The parcelling out of Overyssel between several masters made the fate of that province still more lamentable. Fearing that he would not long retain his new subjects under his dominion, and having no interest, therefore, in showing them any consideration, the Bishop of Münster made them his victims. The emigration of the inhabitants, driven to escape by exile from oppression, spread consternation and despair in Holland. 'We fancied we were dreaming,' writes a contemporary, 'when we learnt that an entire province had been taken from us at one stroke as if

by a secret plot, and that the allies of the King of France, from whom we feared the least, were sharing his good fortune. On all sides were to be seen terrified people, crying out in utter despair, "There is nothing but treachery; we are sold; on the first opportunity we shall be given up."'

The conquests of the King of France had not slackened. Turenne still remained to carry them on, in default of Condé, who, reduced to inaction by his wound, had been moved to Arnheim and subsequently returned to his estate of Chantilly to complete his cure there. His command was given to Turenne; though out of regard for his services and his birth, the King left it nominally in the hands of his son, the Duke d'Enghien, transferring the latter, however, to the Duke of Orleans' division, of which he himself resumed the command. While returning to the head-quarters, which had been transferred to Emmerich, in order to superintend personally all the supplies of provisions and then to proceed to the Yssel, he directed Turenne to pursue the enemy. To carry out his instructions, Turenne, the day after the passage of the Rhine, despatched Count de Guiche in advance, and started to rejoin him with a portion of his forces, leaving his rear-guard under the command of his principal lieutenant, Saint Abre. He feared that the Prince of Orange might attempt the bold stroke of re-entering the island of Betuwe by means of the bridge of boats at Arnheim, in order to oppose the invasion step by step, and with this idea he had sent Count de Guiche in all haste to bar his passage. Instead of making use of the bridge of boats for the purpose of advancing, the Prince of Orange had hastened to destroy it, to prevent the French army following him up in his retreat. Having arrived in sight of Arnheim without encountering any resistance, Count de Guiche, instead of being forced to fight the enemy, had nothing to do but to watch their movements; he sent out a detachment of cavalry to reconnoitre, which forded the Leck below the town, and engaged in a skirmish with the rear-guard of the army of the States.

On the approach of one of Turenne's divisions, the inhabitants of Arnheim appeared disposed to defend themselves.

The garrison, which consisted of at least 2,000 men and had at its disposal a large number of guns, was capable of sustaining a siege. The guns on the ramparts were pointed, and the only shot fired carried off Major-General Count de Plessis Praslin, son of Field-Marshal the Duke de Choiseul. Scarcely had Turenne set up two bridges of boats for the transport of his troops, when the inhabitants and soldiers, thinking it now useless to defend themselves, refused to serve any longer. Negotiations were commenced for the surrender of the town, and this was carried out so hastily that the besiegers made their entry before the capitulation was signed.

Turenne did not wait for Arnheim to surrender before rejoining the detachment commanded by another of his lieutenants, Magalotti, whom he had sent back to the Wahal to take in the rear the fort of Knodsemburg opposite Nimeguen, of which it was the advanced post. The garrison, numbering 300 men, were commanded by a gallant officer, Verschoor, who appeared determined to defend himself to the last extremity. They directed a well-sustained fire on the besiegers, who had easily obtained possession of the counterscarp, and caused them in a few hours the loss of 400 men, 45 being officers, among whom Magalotti was severely wounded. When the ammunition began to fail, the commandant of the fort sent notice to the governor of Nimeguen by his brother, who swam across the Wahal to ask for the needful reinforcements. The governor delayed their despatch, and only at the last extremity permitted a detachment of 600 men to embark; and meanwhile a false signal disconcerted the projects for defence. While the firing was still continuing a parley was, either from a misunderstanding or treachery, suddenly sounded. The garrison, already discontented at not having received earlier assistance, thought themselves abandoned, and, in spite of the efforts made by the commandant to check the confusion, they hastened to the ramparts to ask for quarter. In vain did the commandant attempt with the aid of his officers to recall them to obedience; they forced him to send deputies to the French camp, who succeeded at least in concluding an advantageous capitulation. They refused to

consent to the garrison being made prisoners, and on announcing the determination come to by the officers to set fire to the powder if favourable conditions were refused, obtained for them liberty to withdraw to Groningen with arms and baggage.

Once master of Knodsemburg, Turenne could overawe the garrison of Nimeguen, and, before commencing the siege of that town, he retraced his steps for the purpose of taking possession of Schenck. The fortress of Schenck, situated at the point of the island of Betuwe at the junction of the Rhine and the Wahal, commanded the course of those two rivers, and could intercept the trains of provisions forwarded to the enemy. Its situation made it easy to defend, notwithstanding the bad condition of the fortifications. Supplied with munitions of war and garrisoned by 1,800 men, it could offer prolonged resistance to any attack. It had resisted for nine months the Stadtholder Frederick Henry in the war with Spain; but it only held out for eight hours against the French troops. The command had been bestowed upon a young man named Ten Hove, scarcely twenty-two years old, who was not yet a captain, and for whom his father, burgomaster of Nimeguen and one of the judges of Guelders, had obtained this post, which he was quite unfitted to hold. As presumptuous as he was inexperienced, the young governor had sworn 'to defend himself to his last drop of blood.' But disregarding the advice given him, he began by sending away the armed frigates on the Wahal, which might have prevented the enemy crossing the river where the fortifications were weakest. Moreover, under pretext that he had not sufficient troops to occupy all the posts, without consulting the Council of War he gave orders to demolish some advanced works which Major-General Wurtz had constructed. Turenne immediately on arriving in front of the town perceived this mistake and took advantage of it; pushing forward his trenches so rapidly that the terrified garrison begged for three hours to quit the town. Turenne only granted them one, and they capitulated without having lost a single man. The governor, overwhelmed with shame and assailed on all sides by reproaches of treachery, departed to die sword in hand

in the town of Coeverden during its siege by the Bishop of Münster.

At the same time that he himself was marching towards Schenck, Turenne, in order to complete the subjection of the country, detached from his main body another advanced guard of 500 men, under the command of his nephew, Count de Lorge, and sent it to occupy the right bank of the Wahal, on the very frontier of Holland. Count de Lorge had only to show himself, and the gates of all the towns that he found on his march opened to him. The French troops, meeting no resistance, advanced within sight of Voorn and Saint André, which, notwithstanding their favourable position on small islands formed by the junction of the Wahal and the Meuse, did not even wait to be attacked before surrendering. Nimeguen was thus surrounded on all sides, and Turenne, having prevented the town receiving any assistance, could commence the siege with the most perfect security. He had only to take possession of it in order to break down the last rampart of resistance and thus complete the isolation of Holland.

Louis XIV. had reserved for himself the subjection of that province, which would have placed the republic at his mercy. But a delay of a few days sufficed to deprive him of his conquest. Before undertaking it he determined to proceed to the Yssel, which he had constituted the chief aim of his military operations, proposing there to overtake and destroy the army of the States. The hasty retreat of the Prince of Orange on Utrecht did not produce any alteration in the course which the King of France had decided upon. Before pursuing him he desired, out of love of glory as well as from excess of precaution, to obtain possession of the fortresses on the Yssel, and to complete thus the war of sieges in which he had lately won renown. Accompanied by Vauban, who made him master of every town he besieged, he started from Emmerich on June 16, crossed without any difficulty the river, which was undefended, and while his brother, the Duke of Orleans, was marching on Zutphen, sat down before Doesburg. This town, in spite of its garrison of 3,500 men, only allowed the siege to be begun in order to gain time for capitulation. 'The magis-

trates were inclined to run away,' writes Beverningh, 'and it was hopeless to induce them to resist.' The commandant of the town, Cors, an officer of Scotch origin, was loyal but wanting in energy. The defence was limited to a few discharges of artillery and two infantry sorties, in which four captains of the Swiss regiment lost their lives. The most disastrous event on the side of the besiegers was the death of Martinet, who commanded the King's regiment, and who had carried out in the French infantry the new organisation of which Louvois had drawn up the plan; he himself and two of his aides-de-camp were the victims of the misdirected fire of a French battery. The siege was not of long duration. The King of France ordered fascines to be brought, and gave instructions that the trenches which had been opened in the night should be continued in broad day, and the capitulation was signed without any further effort of resistance being ventured upon by the burgomaster or the garrison.

The town of Zutphen, which was defended by 2,500 soldiers besides five companies of burghers, yielded less readily, but could not escape the fate of the other conquered towns. The want of courage of the magistrates baffled the good intentions of the governor, Swartemburg, and made useless the valour of the inhabitants. A general assembly of the delegates of the nobles and burghers was convoked. Notwithstanding the eager remonstrances of one of the nobles, Schimmelpenning, the party of submission gained all the votes; but the officers of the companies hastened to protest against this deliberation. One of them, John Coulman, distinguished himself in particular by his courageous obstinacy. In response to his appeal, the companies took steps to arrest the negotiators commissioned to surrender to the King of France, and threatened them with a traitor's death if they ventured to leave the town. Informed of these internal divisions, so favourable to his cause, Louis XIV. pushed on the attack with the artillery reinforcements sent by the Bishop of Münster. The French troops were, however, valiantly repulsed for four days, but the disaffection of the magistrates, on whom the governor was unable to impose his authority, disheartened

the soldiers, who complained of being neither paid nor fed, and the burgher companies could not suffice for the defence. The Duke of Orleans received the magistrates of the town, and insisted that the garrison should surrender themselves prisoners of war; he, however, took into consideration the conditions offered by the King of France, granting the free exercise of the reformed religion, and the preservation to the magistrates of their municipal functions, a sorry recompense for the services they had rendered him.

Though Louis had hitherto been everywhere successful, his very successes were preparing for him an unexpected danger. Convinced that the United Provinces could now offer him no resistance, he thought it unnecessary to concentrate his troops, in order to complete without delay the work of conquest, by hastening on the invasion of Holland. He preferred to insure as far as possible the formal possession of the country, by leaving no fortified place behind him in possession of the enemy, and by putting garrisons into all the conquered towns, to the number of twenty-five or thirty. According to the evidence of contemporary authors, in default of any authentic document, it was Louvois who contributed to induce Louis XIV. to adopt this fatal course. The paltry notion that has been attributed to him, of wishing to make tools for himself by appointing military commandants to all the occupied towns, cannot, in the absence of any proof, be laid to his charge. The most likely motive for his conduct is the idea he had conceived of shutting off thus, as if by a new military circle, all access to the intervention of the Elector of Brandenburg and the Emperor of Germany. Moreover, this dissemination of the forces still left at the disposal of the King of France a corps of operation of 40,000 men, which even at the conclusion of the campaign was never reduced to less than 20,000 or 23,000, and which ought assuredly to have sufficed for the conquest of Holland if Louis had been prompt in making use of it.

It was not for want of advice that the King of France failed to given a final blow to the enemy. Condé, kept by his wound at a distance from the scene of action, but always bold in

his inspirations, would have desired to hasten the attack. He heard on his bed at Chantilly of the success of the French army, and was always asking whether the King was at Amsterdam. 'I heard the Prince say,' writes Pellisson, 'that if he had had at his disposal a very large body of artillery, the enemy having very little, he would have made himself master of the roads that protected the approach to Holland, and that by attacking them all at once by the dykes leading to them, the enemy being too weak to defend them all, he would have succeeded in seizing some of them.' If the project failed, it was because Condé was not able to carry it into execution.

Another enterprise, which only required a bold stroke to be successful, was also suggested to Louis XIV. Availing himself of his geographical acquaintance with a country in which he had long resided as ambassador, Count d'Estrades, as impatient as the Prince de Condé, advised the King of France to pursue the enemy without intermission. It was necessary, in his opinion, that Louis should hasten to deprive them of their last resource, that of inundations, by taking possession of Muyden, which would place in his hands the principal sluices in the country; and that he should at the same time make himself master of Woerden by advancing as far as Leyden, so as to have Holland at his mercy. But this letter, which was sent on June 18 from Wesel, the command of which had been conferred on Count d'Estrades, having first been submitted for approbation to Pomponne, could not reach Louis XIV. on the same day, he having already arrived before Doesburg. By the time it was communicated to the King of France defensive measures had already been taken in Holland, and no longer permitted the success of the attempt which D'Estrades hoped 'would have been the finest campaign ever carried out.'

Chance, however, had nearly caused it to succeed. On the very day on which Count d'Estrades was pointing out the plan of campaign which the King of France ought to have followed, Louis XIV. had already despatched an advanced guard, under the command of Lieutenant-General the Marquis de Rochefort. But he had only given him an inadequate number of troops,

and the instructions he desired him to carry out were not those which had just been suggested by D'Estrades. The Marquis de Rochefort set out with 3,000 horse and 6,000 dragoons; he was only commissioned to watch over and annoy the retreat of the Prince of Orange on Utrecht, by cutting off his communications with the Zuyder Zee. The fortified towns that he came across on his road, far from resisting him, sent deputies to offer him their submission, and on arriving at Amersfort he informed Louis XIV. that Utrecht had been abandoned. Having carried out the orders he had received, he was desired to enter that town, which he occupied with his troops, on whom he enforced the strictest discipline. 'The work is so easy here,' he writes, 'that only boldness is wanted to insure success.'

He might, indeed, by a bold stroke have terminated the campaign if the reconnaissance he had attempted in the neighbourhood of Amsterdam had been more successfully carried out; but it had not been put before him as the chief aim of his expedition, and he does not appear to have considered it of much importance. A squadron of 150 dragoons, commanded by M. de Rannes, was detached from his advanced guard, with no preconcerted plan. He contented himself with sending it to observe the advanced posts of Amsterdam, without thinking it necessary to occupy them. In spite of its numerical weakness, this small detachment was nearly endangering the safety of Amsterdam. The approaches to the town beyond a very restricted circle had remained but imperfectly defended, and the confusion consequent on the retreat of the army had prevented this negligence being repaired. Naarden, which commanded the approach to Amsterdam by its favourable situation on the Zuyder Zee, had been left without a commandant and was given up by the burgomasters. The garrison, who had not been informed of the capitulation, escaped with difficulty, the French cavalry pursuing them and making eighty prisoners.

'If I can obtain another fifty horse, I can as easily take two or three towns,' writes the commander of the detachment. Some of the scouts advanced to within two leagues of

Amsterdam, as far as Muyden, which might be considered as one of the keys of the town, because it opened a way to the dyke leading to it. Muyden had been abandoned by its magistrates and inhabitants, and was a prey to anyone who chose to occupy it. According to an account accredited by some contemporary historians, four French dragoons who had entered the town were shut up by a maid-servant in the castle, into which they had penetrated, and of which she raised the drawbridge. 'Our envoy,' write the magistrates of Amsterdam to the deputies of that town to the States, 'found nobody left in Muyden, with the exception of two or three Frenchmen.' The delay, however, was but short. On the same day, Prince John Maurice of Nassau was in possession of the town with a division of the army of the States, numbering about 2,000 men, and had insured himself against any attack. 'The enemy perceiving our troops, retreated,' he writes; 'and we drove them back as far as Naarden.' By midday on June 20 the magistrates of Amsterdam were informed of his arrival, which prevented all possibility of a sudden attack being carried out, even if it had been seriously attempted.

Once master of Muyden, the Prince of Nassau could not fail to attach the greatest importance to the possession of Naarden, and was of course impatient to retake it; but a French garrison of 600 dragoons and eleven companies of infantry had just been sent into the town, within reach of the 3,000 men who occupied Amersfort, and when it is remembered that the first detachment sent out to reconnoitre only numbered 150 dragoons, we may be allowed to believe that it was the letter written by Count d'Estrades to Louis XIV. which had caused these reinforcements to be so promptly sent. Happily for Holland, Muyden was saved, and by the time the enemy's troops were assembled in sufficient numbers to take possession of it, the position it was so much for their interest to seize was beyond their reach. Later, all the strength of the attack was put forth against it in vain, the line of defence guarded by the remnant of the army of the States-General remained intact and insured to the republic an entrenched position rendered impregnable by the inundations.

Louis XIV. was none the less confident that he already had at his mercy all the country that still remained unconquered, and whose easy subjection was promised him by Turenne. Before advancing to take possession of it, he published a proclamation in which he promised to use indulgence towards the towns which should open to him their gates, and threatened to treat without mercy those that attempted resistance. He considered that he had no longer enemies to fight against, but only rebels to subdue. The deputation just sent by the States of Utrecht to Doesburg, where he was still encamped, encouraged his presumption. It consisted of three members of their assembly, Tuyl de Seroskerke de Wallant, president of the States, Jacob van der Does de Berkestein, and Van der Voorst, burgomaster of the town. Louis offered them conditions which they had hardly hoped to obtain: he guaranteed to them the preservation of all their privileges, with free exercise of the reformed religion, and added the promise that their province should not be separated from the confederation of the United Provinces, but should be comprised in the articles of the treaty of peace that he would grant to the republic.

In order to carry on more readily the negotiations which had been entered into with the States-General, the King of France advanced towards Utrecht and established his headquarters at the castle of Zeyst, the property of Odyk, the favourite of the Prince of Orange. He subsequently made his solemn entry into the town at the head of nine or ten thousand men, amongst whom were the picked troops consisting of twenty-two companies of the regiment of French Guards and two companies of the body-guard. His brother, the Duke of Orleans, and Monmouth, natural son of Charles II., escorted him in the midst of a splendid train; the presence of the English Prince, who had brought a regiment with him, was a public manifestation of the indissoluble alliance of the two Kings. The Catholic population appeared for the first time disposed to give the King of France a cordial reception. Hitherto, in spite of D'Estrades' predictions, and notwithstanding the inferiority to which they were reduced by the system of tolerance

that was all they could lay claim to, they had nowhere pronounced in favour of the enemy. But at Utrecht they at least took part in the religious rejoicings with which the solemn restoration of their worship was celebrated in the cathedral when it was consecrated by Cardinal de Bouillon.

Louis XIV., who was never happy in a large town, did not remain long in Utrecht, and left behind him as governor the Duke of Luxembourg, who spared the inhabitants none of the ills of conquest. He returned to Zeyst and there waited till the time should arrive for him to impose his will on the vanquished. His confidence was shared by those around him, and appeared to be well founded. 'I hope,' writes Louvois to Letellier, 'that we shall know without further delay what to expect from our neighbours, and, unless I am much mistaken, they will sign everything that is asked of them.'

The passage of the Rhine, the victorious entry of the French army into Betuwe, which had, so to speak, disappeared beneath the flood of invasion, its rapid progress into Weluwe, which had enabled Louis XIV. to advance as far as Utrecht, while advanced detachments were sent to the Zuyder Zee, and the rapid conquests of the Bishop of Münster on the other side of the Yssel, had broken up the republic of the United Provinces; it resembled a chess-board on which all the pieces are separated and cannot assist one another. The Country of the Generality and the three provinces of Guelders, Utrecht, and Overyssel, were already in the enemy's power; Friesland and Groningen, being isolated, seemed unable to escape the same fate, Zealand was surrounded, while Holland, in which the Confederation still retained a feeble remnant of life, seemed herself to be attacked with mortal weakness. Her inhabitants no longer felt themselves safe within her borders. The wealthier families were beginning to send away their women and children, and to place their treasures in safety elsewhere; most of them buried their riches in cellars and wells. The people had lost their heads. 'The terror was so great,' writes Gourville in his memoirs, 'that the Jews of Amsterdam sent me word that they would give two millions to the Prince of Condé if he would save their quarter.' Public credit was

exhausted at the fountain head. The provincial bonds, which had been at a premium of 100 per cent., were now with difficulty negotiated at 30 per cent.; the shares of the East India Company, which had easily found purchasers at 572 florins, and of the market price of which Condé, who was a keen speculator, took care to be well informed, were being offered at 250 florins, and the bank-paper, for which public confidence had given as much as four or five per cent. more than for coin, had sunk to four or five per cent. below it. 'Everyone,' writes Valkenier, a contemporary author, 'seemed to be under sentence of death, trade was at a standstill, the shops were shut, the sittings of the courts of justice closed, the academies and schools taking holiday. On the other hand, the churches were too small to contain the numbers that came to pray to God for the safety of the republic. It was said that the government had no plan, the people no tongue, and the country no hope.' Accusations of treachery scattered in all directions kept up mistrust and spread discouragement.

The first despatches written by the military commanders justify this panic, and show clearly that they would have been unable to maintain their positions if they had been forced to defend them against a sudden attack. On the north of the line of defence Major-General Wurtz and Louvignies, who occupied the posts of Gorcum and Schoonhoven, on which depended the safety of Rotterdam and Dordrecht, urgently demanded reinforcements, and General Wurtz declared 'that the fortress of Gorcum was lost if he had to repulse the enemy.' On the south, Prince John Maurice of Nassau, who was defending the approaches to Amsterdam at Muyden, was even less confident. The peasants sent to him by the Prince of Orange to be employed on the fortifications had fled during the night. His tired soldiers, to whom he could with difficulty furnish the necessary implements, refused to work with the spade and shovel, although he promised them a florin a day. Their want of discipline went unpunished, and he was forced to ask for a provost-marshal to enable him to restore it. Even war material was wanting. The guns at his disposal were mounted for the most part on gun-carriages about a foot

from the ground. At the risk of exaggerating his complaints, he says that his troops, 'if deprived of more powder and shot, must be butchered,' and he writes to the Prince of Orange with sorrowful resignation: 'Unless we have reinforcements you will have no cause to be surprised if our necks are broken.'

'The great and astonishing progress which my armies had made in so short a time,' writes Louis XIV. in his account of the war with Holland, 'the idea and forebodings of certain ruin and the general overthrow of the republic, the small reliance there was to be placed in a new and depreciated army, commanded by an inexperienced young man, all these sad and hopeless reflections bewildered the Dutch and put them beside themselves.' The Grand Pensionary, on his side, confided to his brother in these terms the uneasiness caused him by the disorder and confusion which he witnessed: 'May God improve the state of affairs here, which grows every day worse! May He preserve us from fresh misfortunes!' At the same time he drew the attention of the States of Holland to the shortcomings of many of the magistrates, who 'have no courage and paralyse all the forces of the government. We shall be the cause of our own ruin,' he declares, 'because we do ourselves more harm than the enemy has done us. If the matter be not looked to, we shall be left without hope or remedy.'

In this extremity an insurmountable barrier to the progress of the French army was offered by the inundations, and the republic was indebted for her safety to this last means of defence. Holland, whose very name means a hollow or low country, can easily be inundated. She is intersected from the Meuse to the Zuyder Zee by a number of rivers, canals, lakes, and gulfs; and the level of the land, which in several places is lower than the rivers, and even below the level of the sea at high tide, obliges the inhabitants to multiply dykes in order to prevent the country being submerged. Raised above the meadows and intersected by ditches, the dykes serve as causeways and take the place of roads. They communicate with one another at intervals by means of sluices, which

enable the water to be let out on to the land, as it rises, and which, closing as it returns, leave the water confined in small basins. Where there are no sluices, or if it is necessary to hasten the inundation, more especially in dry seasons, it suffices to open cuttings in the dykes, in order to submerge the land at high tide, dams being constructed to prevent its being dried up at low tide. The sluices once opened, and the dykes cut, the only thoroughfares that remain accessible are the high causeways, a sort of bridges which are easily destroyed or defended.

From one frontier to the other, Holland can thus call the waters to her aid against invasion, and make use of them as a continuous circle of entrenchments. On the north, it is true, the tide of the Zuyder Zee did not rise high enough to produce an overflow, but an heroic measure might still be taken, that of cutting through the dykes, so as to be able without the help of the sluices to inundate completely, even at low tide, all the land on a lower level than the sea. The steps necessary for making the various parts of Holland inaccessible to invasion had been studied beforehand. The French Government had inquired into the matter, and as early as the year 1670 had tried to obtain information by means of an envoy, whose mission was suspected by the States and who had to be precipitately recalled. The traditions were thus revived of the patriotism which, a century before, in the heroic War of Independence, had saved Leyden by returning to the ocean a part of the land conquered from the sea.

The necessity for having recourse to this plan of defence had not escaped the Grand Pensionary, and he had urged its execution, which the States of Utrecht opposed, as he complained afterwards to Beverningh. At his suggestion the States of Holland had at length, though tardily, sent instructions to all the inspectors of dykes, enjoining them to draw up a report speedily, in concert with the deputies of the towns whose consent was to be first obtained. Numerous debates set before us with the most precise details the mode in which the inundation was to be prepared in each district; they show that, by the end of the month of April, the most necessary works were

everywhere begun, from North Holland as far as Brabant, and that they were being pushed forward with the greatest activity, in the direction of Brabant, along the Wahal and the Meuse, upon the entire line on which the States-General expected to be attacked.

On the news of the enemy's approach, the Grand Pensionary hastened to put into execution the final decisions which had hitherto remained in suspense. In the beginning of June the deputies of Haarlem, Leyden, Amsterdam, Gouda, Schoonhoven, Alkmaar, Hoorn, and Enckhuyzen, were commissioned to give an account to the Assembly of the States of the measures that were to be taken for flooding the country by raising the sluices or cutting the dykes. On their report the most minute and urgent instructions were given to the magistrates of the towns, at the request of the Grand Pensionary, and the former received orders, the day after the passage of the Rhine, to hasten on the inundations. A sum of 50,000 florins was placed at their disposal to provide the necessary means.

It was Amsterdam that responded with the greatest eagerness to this final appeal, and which was the first to give the signal for the patriotic measures without which the republic would have been lost. The magistrates of the town had at first hesitated; instead of submerging the country they let it be understood that in the event of the States proceeding to inundate the approaches to the town, they would oppose them by every means in their power. The authentic report of the sitting of the Council sets forth the resistance which they persisted in maintaining.

The Council say that they cannot understand how the deputies of Amsterdam could allow the States of Holland to adopt the resolution of inundating the environs of the town. The waters can, as has already been done, be kept up and ready to overflow, if necessary; but they have not yet arrived at the extremity of flooding the country, to the great prejudice of the inhabitants and of the fields, at the moment when the hay is still standing, and the corn cannot yet be cut. The cattle left without food will die; the people will be unable to pay their taxes, and the waters becoming stagnant during the heat will

cause the plague and other diseases. It is observed that the enemy has as yet only taken the frontier towns, and the burgomasters are authorised to suspend the execution of the resolution of the States, by stopping the cutting of the dykes. A report was read from Geelvinck, deputy of the town to the States, saying that he accepted the post of commissioner for the inundations, and representing the necessity of flooding the country in consequence of the imminent danger, the enemy being within eight days of the gates of Amsterdam. Sharp words were exchanged; surprise was expressed that Geelvinck should have lost all confidence. Some members of the Council wished him to be sent for to give explanations of his conduct.

Two days later the Council of Amsterdam, having heard of the passage of the Rhine, were forced to acknowledge that the fears which they had thought exaggerated were now only too well justified. They therefore decided to commence by coming to an agreement with the deputies of Gouda, for the purpose of raising the waters of the Lake of Haarlem to their highest level. In the evening sitting the energetic appeal of the burgomaster Hœuft, and the high bailiff Hasselaar, whose son had been killed in the battle of Solebay, was loyally re-echoed. The committee of burgomasters and former burgomasters, consisting of twelve members, 'considering that inundation was less fatal than invasion,' sent word to the commissioners of the States that they left them full powers.

Next morning the policy of temporisation appeared, it is true, to prevail, and the burgomasters declared that they could not take so desperate a measure without consulting the sheriffs and councillors assembled together to the number of thirty. But the following day their final hesitation was overcome, and a definite consent given. The burgomaster, Van de Pol, made known the resolution come to by the States two days previously; it was peremptory, and directed that the waters should be let in, as the only chance of safety for Holland. The burgomasters, having decided at first to send for the councillors, acknowledged on the urgent representations of the former burgomaster, Valkenier, that their advice must be dispensed with, because any adjournment, even of a few

hours, might have the most fatal consequences. It was decided, as is set forth in the memorable report of the sitting of June 15, that the sluices should be opened and the dykes cut.

The orders were signed by those of the burgomasters in office who were present, Van de Pol, Outshoven, and Rynst. The Town Council, in full assembly, at length approved them, after stormy sittings, in one of which the former burgomaster, Vlooswyck, attacked the deputy Geelvinck, whom he held responsible for the resolution of the States. Orders were issued to destroy the buildings and gardens contiguous to the ramparts, which might have served as shelter to the assailants. The mills were only spared on the promise of the millers to set fire to them themselves as soon as the approach of the enemy should be notified. Three days later the entry of the waters was suspended, the inundation having, according to the report of the sittings of the Council, produced what was to be expected of it. The great sacrifice was consummated. The waters poured over the meadows in all directions and drowned the crops; the country houses which were the real homes of the rich burghers of Amsterdam, who usually had no residence in their town except their counting-houses and shops, were overwhelmed by the waters, or pulled down and converted into entrenchments. Everything disappeared: plants, hothouses, and exotic gardens, with the collections of all sorts which adorned them. The estates belonging to the magistrates of the town were submerged in order to induce the poorer inhabitants to support more easily the losses they were obliged to endure. 'The surrounding country being inundated,' writes Charles II.'s minister, Arlington, 'Amsterdam remains as a shelter for the States.'

At the same time the magistrates shrank from no expense, and generously contributed 700,000 florins from the treasury of the town. The works of fortification carried out by the most skilful engineers completed the security of the defence. The ramparts were protected by twenty-six bastions furnished with cannon; six regiments of burghers, each consisting of ten companies, were under arms; the representatives of the oldest Dutch families, Hasselaar, Witsen, Hœuft, and Bicker, com-

manded them. Fourteen companies of militia had been enrolled, 1,600 sailors from the fleet were employed in defending the dykes. More than 12,000 men, under the command of Colonel van Beveren, were thus assembled by the end of June within the walls of the town. Protected besides towards the sea by the frigates, which intercepted the entrance to the Zuyder Zee, and by the armed flotilla which occupied the gulf of the Y, under the command of Lobs, councillor-deputy of Holland, assisted by Bontemantel, one of the sheriffs of the town, Amsterdam was soon placed in a position which defied all attack, and might be considered as impregnable.

It required nothing less than this powerful and generous example to overcome the resistance offered to the inundations by the inhabitants of the country districts, who preferred the preservation of their fields to the safety of their fatherland. The rising of the peasants, who, instead of labouring at the works for which they were requisitioned, opposed them by force of arms, with the more or less avowed complicity of the local governments and of some of the town councils, rendered useless the energetic intervention of the commissioners of the States, Vivien, De Zwyndrecht, brother-in-law of John de Witt, Van Arkel, Ruyl, and Meerman. This resistance prevented the progress of the enemy being arrested in time, and made it necessary to draw back the line of defence behind Woerden as far as Nieuverburg. 'Notwithstanding all we are able to do for the inflow of the waters,' writes De Witt to his brother, 'the work still remains in suspense, and will only be carried through by force.'

This the States no longer hesitated to employ. They despatched companies of cavalry to disperse and arrest the peasantry. At the same time they wrote to the Prince of Orange desiring him to set them to work by force if necessary, and urged on the commissioners to employ soldiers in default of the peasants, without heeding any remonstrances. All obstacles were soon surmounted, and in every direction the open sluices and broken-down dykes transformed the plains into marshes. The inundation, commenced on June 15, was nearly completed by the 20th. Holland was to remain

submerged for the next two years, assailable only in winter during the frosts, and at other times all but inaccessible, being, so to speak, buried beneath the waters. Such was the price she paid for her deliverance.

During these melancholy days, the States of Holland showed no signs of weakness, and won honour by their patriotic conduct. The very day after the passage of the Rhine, on hearing the disastrous news by a letter from the burgomaster of Nimeguen, they had courageously resolved, after the first expressions of dismay recorded in the report of their deliberations, to overcome their ill-fortune. The difficulties of their task neither disheartened them nor drove them to despair; and the Grand Pensionary, whose untiring assistance never failed them, incited them to the most efficacious measures for defence. 'God Almighty has means of helping us,' he writes to Beverningh, 'if only the vanquished will take courage once more—*donec redeat victis in præcordia virtus.*' In the speech made by him to the States, a summary of which has been preserved in the manuscript of a member of the Assembly, he pointed out the danger with bold frankness, and urged them to offer indomitable resistance to the invasion. Anxious to provide at any price an asylum for the independence of the United Provinces, and fearing that it would not be possible to place the Hague beyond the reach of invasion, he begged them to seek refuge in Amsterdam, taking with them money, artillery, and supplies, and assembling there the deputies of the provinces, to make it, with the consent of the magistrates of the town, the seat of public authority. He reminded them that the defence of Copenhagen had been the means of saving the kingdom of Denmark from the conquest of the King of Sweden, and advised them to take advantage of the resources that were to be found in a large, well-fortified, and well-supplied town, to which all that might be wanting could be brought by sea. 'If these were extreme remedies,' he declared, 'they were demanded by the extremity which threatened the republic.'

Surprised by this proposal, the deputies of Holland at first received it with hesitation, and waited some days before com-

municating it to the States-General. Encouraged by the declarations of the foreign ambassadors, who announced their intention of following them to Amsterdam, they despatched thither the stores contained in their arsenals as well as the public treasure, giving the necessary instructions to their receiver-general, Pauw, and directing him to concert with the treasurer-general of the Confederation, Conrad Burg. The Council of Amsterdam expressed themselves eagerly in favour of this project, and stated their opinion in this proudly laconic phrase: 'The Council consider it well to give effect to this resolution, not doubting that the assemblies of the country being here, measures of defence will be properly carried out.' The steps taken to arrest the enemy on the frontiers of Holland proved sufficient, however, to guarantee the Hague against any surprise, and the inundations enabled the government of the republic to wait in safety for better times.

It was to the States of Holland that belonged the duty of providing for the defence of their province against invasion. The States-General seemed to have thrown off the responsibility when they recalled the deputies who represented them with the army. Only Beverningh remained accredited to the Prince of Orange, in accordance with the new commission given him by the States of Holland, on whom had now devolved the exercise of the federal power for all measures of defence. They caused the commandants of the different detachments that guarded the approach to their territory to be assisted by commissioners charged with the execution of all orders for the troops, and delegated to four deputies of their Assembly full powers 'in all that concerned the protection of the province.' They responded thus to the appeal addressed to them by the commissioners of the States-General, summoning them to demand from the deputies of all the towns of Holland a promise that they would stand by one another to the very last man. To carry out loyally these instructions, they recalled all the members of their Assembly who were absent, and some days later enjoined on all magistrates who, yielding to panic, had abandoned the frontier towns of the

province, to return without delay under pain of severe punishment.

The States of Holland were equally anxious to restore military discipline. They brought to trial the officers belonging to the regiments of the provincial contingent who had surrendered the strong places on the Rhine, caused Colonel Daniel d'Osory, commandant of Rhynberg, to be arrested, and vied in severity with the States-General, who had ordered proceedings to be taken against Montbas, thus showing that they did not intend to leave either treachery or weakness unpunished. Eager also to provide supplies for the army, they made requisitions on the towns for wheelbarrows, shovels, and pickaxes for the works of fortification, sent 500 muskets and 500 gun-barrels to the Prince of Orange, gave orders through Valkenier, one of the deputies of Amsterdam, that the manufacture of powder should be carried on day and night in the mills of the town, withdrew 50,000 pounds from their ships, and requested the Admiralty of Amsterdam to furnish them with an advance of 60,000.

While the Prince of Orange by the firmness of his discipline was obliging the cavalry regiments which he had brought back to Holland to perform the service of foot soldiers, hasty levies were filling up the gaps left in the army by the dispersion of the troops sent into garrison after the passage of the Rhine. The States of Holland, not satisfied with completing the last levy of 22,000 men decided upon immediately after war broke out, and which had already furnished several regiments, determined, in addition, to send half the population to join the army, by a forced levy of one man in every two. Fearing the resistance so severe a conscription was certain to provoke, they contented themselves with taking from the regiments of peasants one man in four every week for duty, and consented to employ the burgher companies only in garrisoning the towns or the coast, provided the towns would furnish at their own expense, as compensation, fresh companies of militia for service in the field. They repeated, though vainly, the order to the garrison of Maestricht to return, enjoining them to proceed towards

Antwerp ; but they could not succeed in making their way out of the blockaded fortress. They took into the service of Holland the regiments of Guelders and Utrecht which had been brought back to their territory after the retreat of the army, and which could no longer obtain their pay from the invaded provinces.

The naval forces placed at their disposal by the States-General, under the direction of three commissioners, were still more useful. The States of Holland hastened to avail themselves of these by recalling the 2,000 marines who formed the two regiments in the pay of their province, under the command of the gallant Colonels Palm and Weede van Walenburgh. They brought on shore some of the gunners of the fleet, and sent them to serve in the army, with detachments of sailors commanded by such valiant captains as Engel de Ruyter, son of the Admiral, and Van Brakel. To complete their precautions for defence, they detached important reinforcements of peasants and burghers, to the number of 169 companies, to guard the coasts of the North Sea and the Zuyder Zee, under the command of Lieutenant-General van Velderen, who had established his head-quarters at the Helder. At the same time numerous sloops, armed with guns, intercepted the mouths of the rivers; protected along its entire length the line of defence resting on the Meuse, the Wahal, the Leck, the Amstel, and the Zuyder Zee; and prevented the enemy's troops advancing in boats over the inundated country. By water as well as by land the passage was thus closed to invasion. The safety of the republic, of which the Prince of Orange was to reap the glory, had thus been promptly and efficaciously provided for by the States of Holland under the advice and direction of their Grand Pensionary. If the honour of completing this great work was not theirs, the merit belongs none the less to them, and it was their First Minister who ought to have obtained the recompense.

Their bold resolutions averted the ruin which appeared inevitable. Encouraged by their assistance, the detachments guarding the frontiers of the province defended the posts which they occupied against all attack. These were the

only passages the overflow of the water still left accessible to the enemy; once placed in a state of defence they served as fortresses. The few days' respite imprudently left to the States by Louis XIV. had sufficed to repair the disasters caused by the invasion.

While Holland was securing her safety by inundations and the other measures taken for resistance, Zealand was successfully repulsing an attempt at aggression, and placing herself beyond the reach of conquest. Before entering the territory of the United Provinces, Louis XIV., taking advantage of the advanced posts which the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle had given him in the Netherlands, had left a corps of observation in Flanders, under the command of Nancré, to watch the movements of the Spanish troops in the Netherlands. Towards the end of June, Nancré received orders to rejoin Count Chamilly, who had remained in the neighbourhood of Maestricht and was demanding reinforcements in order to subdue Dutch Brabant. As he was on the point of starting he was informed that the fortress of Aardenburg, which commanded the important stronghold of Sluys and gave access to Zealand, was without a governor and almost undefended. Confiding in the protection of the Spanish territory which covered the fortress, the States-General, to whom it directly belonged as a part of the Country of the Generality, had only left in it nine small guns, and a garrison of forty men commanded by Ensign Elias Beekman.

Without informing Count Chamilly, Nancré immediately conceived the idea of commencing the conquest of Zealand, by obtaining possession of Aardenburg. At the head of 5,000 men he marched through the Spanish territory without scruple and without meeting any obstacle, crossed the canal between Ghent and Bruges, and advanced upon Aardenburg, persuaded that a fortress nearly destitute of means of defence would surrender almost before the arrival of the French troops. His confidence was cruelly disappointed. The magistrates of Aardenburg, suddenly informed by a letter written from Ghent that a strong column of the enemy was approaching, assembled in all haste to concert with the military commandant as to the

steps to be taken. The position of affairs appeared so desperate that one of the Council proposed to keep open the gates of the fort. But Ensign Beekman indignantly opposed this idea; one of the sheriffs, named Rooman, supported him, and the defence was unanimously agreed upon.

The burghers flew to arms, 165 of them joining themselves to the little garrison, and 200 defenders occupied the ramparts, which were protected by bastions and demi-lunes, though the ditches were in some places fordable. While awaiting the enemy the women and children brought matches, powder, lead, and pieces of iron, with which in default of cannon balls they loaded the guns, and to these they added trunks of trees destined to crush the assailants. Nancré, having made a rapid march, arrived before Aardenburg as night was falling, with only his advanced guard composed almost entirely of cavalry. After vainly summoning the town to surrender he ordered an assault to be made, hoping to carry it by a sudden attack. The French horsemen dismounted and advanced with their swords in one hand, and fascines in the other with which to fill up the ditch. But the besieged after two hours' fighting forced them to retire with great loss.

Before renewing the attack, Nancré waited for the arrival of the rest of his troops, who rejoined him in the course of the day. The besieged, on their side, received a first reinforcement, which, though it barely exceeded fifty men, was sufficient to encourage them. As soon as night fell, Nancré gave the signal for the assault. Four columns threw themselves upon the town, penetrated as far as one of the demi-lunes, which they succeeded in occupying, filled up the shallow ditch with fascines, and advanced towards the principal inclosure. But the fire of the besieged struck down numbers of the assailants; the trunks of trees thrown amongst them broke their ranks, and caused disorder in their midst; while those who reached the ramparts were killed or made prisoners. A second assault had no better success than the first; the French infantry, retreating in confusion and vainly brought back to the attack by the cavalry, offered a compact mass to the fire from the fortress, which opened frequent large gaps in their midst.

Meanwhile, on hearing the noise of the cannonade, Colonel Spindler, who was raising a regiment in the neighbourhood, led a portion of the garrison of the fortress of Sluys to the assistance of Aardenburg, while the captain of a Zealand ship, John Mathuysen, landed 200 of his crew, who charged the enemy and thus placed them between two fires. The besieged issuing from the town took the offensive, and the victory was decided. At break of day Nancré, disheartened by his losses, withdrew with all speed and retreated upon Ath. He had lost more than five hundred men, amongst whom were fifty officers killed or wounded; and in addition one of his detachments, which had taken up its position in the outer entrenchments of the town, cut off in its retreat by the cannon of the fortress, was forced to lay down its arms. He was not spared reproaches by Louvois. His unsuccessful enterprise had proved that the victor was not invincible, while the courage of the defenders of Aardenburg had aroused the old traditions of the War of Independence. 'Nothing more is wanted for our safety, than that this example should be followed,' proudly writes Peter de Huybert, Pensionary of Zealand, in describing this unhoped-for success.

The republic of the United Provinces, though at first crushed by the humiliation of her earlier disasters, might still retain hopes of not being overwhelmed. A letter written on the first tidings of the invasion, when the passage of the Rhine seemed to have opened every road into the country, gives a touching proof of patriotism brought to bay but still offering indomitable resistance. It was addressed to the States-General by the Secretary of Embassy at Madrid, Gilbert Mels. 'I write to you with my heart's tears rather than with ink, not out of cowardice or want of courage, but from sharp suffering which pierces my heart and soul on learning that my fellow-countrymen are dragging through the mud the glory they conquered a hundred years ago; I conceal our faults as well as I can, by letting it be known that there has been treachery and inferiority of forces, and I assert that something different will soon be heard of. I say this although for very shame I had rather shrink out of

sight and die a thousand deaths than see the brightness of our State sullied. If you think I could be of any use, I would give you my goods, my life, and the last drop of my blood, to defend my dear country. Although I am not experienced in military matters, I am stout enough to stop a breach, and to defend it to my last breath.' This breach to be stopped had been closed by the inundations, which had transformed Holland into an island surrounded by an inaccessible sea.

The projects of Louis XIV. had thus been abruptly disconcerted. 'His Majesty,' writes Louvois, 'will be able in eight days to send troops to pillage the Hague and the towns of Holland which cannot be inundated in the dry weather we have now.' He little expected to find his victorious march suddenly arrested by an insurmountable obstacle. His ambassador at the court of Vienna, the Chevalier de Gremonville, could not forgive the States of Holland for 'the audacity' with which they had had recourse to this extreme measure for the purpose of resisting conquest. 'If they had not made use of an element as unstable as themselves,' he declared to the Emperor's ministers, 'there is every likelihood that by this time they would be under the yoke; but the obstinate fury of this rabble may be recognised chiefly in the fact that, although they perceive that God is punishing them, instead of humbling themselves they become more exasperated, and prefer to ruin and destroy their country and their subjects, and to expose themselves to the danger of being drowned, rather than submit to so glorious and triumphant a conqueror.' Louis XIV.—to his honour be it said—refrained from giving expression to any such anger, and, however great his disappointment may have been, nobly paid homage to those who had caused it. 'The determination to flood the whole country was certainly rather violent,' he declared in his memoir on the war with Holland, 'but what would not one do to save oneself from foreign domination?'

Still, though the inundations, by checking the progress of invasion, saved the republic from perishing, she could only be finally delivered by alliances, and negotiations with the enemy. Alliances would secure to her the advantage of a diversion

necessary for her enfranchisement, and negotiations would give her time to wait for assistance from abroad. Immediately on the declaration of war by France and England, the Grand Pensionary had pointed out the imperative necessity for seeking foreign support, and had urgently represented to the States that the allied princes ought to be persuaded to arm themselves without further delay for mutual defence, in consideration of the subsidies granted them for the support of their troops.

Europe was beginning to arouse, and was becoming uneasy at the rapid victories of Louis XIV. and the formidable increase of territory which the conquest of the United Provinces would give to France. 'Jealousy is shown at the great success of the French arms, for which some efficient and real remedy is being sought,' writes one of the correspondents of the States. 'It is hoped that you will be able to withstand the enemy for a few weeks, which will suffice for the hostile army to evaporate into smoke and consume itself.' Temple, who in his voluntary retirement followed anxiously the course of events which he no longer directed, shared the same opinion. He compares Louis XIV. to a skilful swimmer, who throws himself into the water full of ardour and courage, so that no one can tell how far he may not go; 'but,' he adds, 'a strong current, the failure of his strength, or an accident may drive him back.'

To escape from her conqueror, the republic of the United Provinces could not suffice dy herself alone; it was from abroad that the boon of deliverance came to her.

Sweden, detached by Louis XIV. from the Triple Alliance and taken as it were into his pay, was beginning to be alarmed; she would willingly have allowed the King of France to humiliate the republic, but she could not permit him to destroy it. She considered that the destruction of the United Provinces would entail that of the entire commerce of the North, and would leave England mistress of the sea. Foreseeing this the States-General, as soon as they received the declaration of war of Louis and Charles, presented a memoir to the Senate, demanding by the terms of the

treaties the assistance of the Swedish Government. The Senate determined to write to Louis XIV. offering their mediation; but they contented themselves for the moment with that proposal, and the ambassador of the States-General, Van Haren, who had remained loyally at his post, could not help fearing 'that the sympathy shown towards the cause of the republic by the Grand Chancellor would not be followed by any more efficient demonstration.'

The United Provinces reckoned with more certainty on the alliance of Denmark, on whose behalf they had intervened in the last war with Sweden. The agreement between France and Sweden disposed Christian V. towards the republic, and his pecuniary differences with the States-General having been submitted to the arbitration of Louis XIV. he gave up the hopes that he might have confidently entertained of a favourable decision on the part of the King of France. Conferences presided over by Schimmelpenning, deputy to the States-General, were therefore held at the Hague, for the purpose of arriving at a mutual agreement. The States-General, not satisfied with the presence at Copenhagen of their resident, Jacob Lemaire, sent Wijngaerden, Lord of Werkendam, one of the principal members of the States of Holland, to represent them there, with instructions to counteract the advances of the French minister, the Chevalier de Terlon, by offers of subsidies which should hasten the despatch of auxiliary troops guaranteed by the treaties of alliance. Werkendam failed to carry out his instructions with the necessary promptitude, and two months after his departure the States of Holland sent him orders to make another urgent appeal to the King of Denmark. The differences between the two States were settled by mutual agreement, and no further obstacle seemed likely to interfere with the convention of military assistance. Werkendam held out hopes that the King of Denmark would be prepared to despatch from Holstein a body of 10,000 men to be added to the troops of the Elector of Brandenburg, and he announced that soldiers came every day to offer their services to the republic; but although the Danish court showed itself favourable to enlistments, it contented itself with

promises, and kept the United Provinces waiting two years longer for an offensive alliance.

The States-General were making efforts to engage Switzerland also on their side, and hurried on their levies in that country. Count Dohna had been selected for this mission in consequence of his connection with the Swiss cantons, as owner of the Barony of Coppet and the estate of Prangeau. He was treated with honour at Berne and received with great pomp at Zurich. The Protestant cantons, by reason of their community of religion, appeared disposed to take up the cause of the States-General, and the preachers of Berne offered up prayers for the Reformed Church of the United Provinces, threatened or persecuted by France. At the same time, the good offices of the Spanish ministers disposed the Catholic cantons in their favour. The officers who were serving in the army of the King of France received orders to take no part in the war against the United Provinces, 'under penalty of losing their heads and their goods.' In vain the regiment of Swiss Guards, which formed a part of the Prince of Condé's division, put forward this prohibition as a reason for refusing to besiege the fortresses of the Rhine, and laid down their arms under pretence of acting in accordance with the capitulations concluded with the Confederation. Condé overcame these scruples by causing the Swiss soldiers to be surrounded by the rest of his troops, and threatening to give them no quarter if they did not set forward. They obeyed, declaring that they only yielded to force.

This violence could not fail to encourage the friendly dispositions of the cantons towards the States; but it required great caution on the part of the latter to overcome their hesitation. In order to obtain levies of soldiers, their resident at Frankfort, Malapert, requested that they should be made quietly and without ostentation. In compliance with his advice also the States delayed the despatch into Switzerland of their envoy, Van Ommeren, whom they had selected so far back as the month of April; and to avoid difficulties, Bruyninck, the minister of the States at Vienna, requested authority from the Emperor to assemble on imperial

territory the soldiers who should be enlisted in the cantons. It was vain to expect that the Diet now assembling at Aaran should encourage these enlistments and consent to take part against the King of France, whose subsidies the cantons were anxious to retain. The Diet restricted itself to remonstrating with Louis XIV. on the subject of the employment of Swiss troops outside the kingdom, without gaining any attention for their complaints.

Fortunately for the United Provinces, Spain had not followed the example of the other States of Europe; notwithstanding all the French King's advances, she had boldly embarked in the defence of the republic. The auxiliary corps which she had placed at the disposal of the States-General proved of great use by enabling them to fortify the advanced posts of Holland with picked troops commanded by experienced and devoted leaders. Moreover, the Spanish court promised shortly to send fresh reinforcements, had ordered more levies, and was completing her maritime armaments, consisting of 35 galleys and 40 ships of war. But military as well as financial resources were wanting to enable her to undertake a war against France. Besides the troops sent to the Netherlands, there were now in Spain only 3,000 foot and 1,500 horse, including the regiment of Guards. Although Spain, therefore, in order to assist the States-General as their ally, made full use of the liberty left her by her treaties with France, as France had made use of them also for the purpose of intervening on behalf of Portugal, she would not consent to a rupture which would have made her ruin inevitable, by drawing upon her the shock of the French invasion. She had saved the United Provinces by helping them to defend themselves; but she could not aid them in taking the offensive.

The States-General had, however, reason to hope that their alliance with the Spanish Government might affect the Emperor of Germany and put an end to the vacillations of his constantly shifting policy. It was true that the conventions entered into in the previous year by Leopold I. with Louis XIV., by which he had engaged to give no assistance to the United Provinces in their war with France, seemed to

oppose an obstacle to any negotiations. But the Emperor had, notwithstanding, reserved to himself the right of maintaining the previous treaties affecting his own security and the defence of Germany. The alliance of the King of France with the Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster, the entry of the French troops into their dominions, and finally the treaty concluded between France and Sweden which threatened the Empire with a Swedish invasion, roused Leopold's fears of a renewal of the great struggle that had been ended by the treaty of Westphalia. Under these circumstances he could not conceal from himself the danger of the neutrality which he had promised the King of France, and was no longer inclined to look with indifference on the fate of the United Provinces, but rather considered them as the outworks of the Netherlands and the bulwark of the Empire. The schemes of Louis XIV. gave rise to many alarming suppositions. He was suspected of an intention of having himself elected at Aix-la-Chapelle King of the Romans, in other words, future emperor. A letter from Paris says: 'I have seen a diamond rose that has been made for the king, and which is said to be worth 1,300,000 francs; one stone alone is worth 300,000 francs. There is also a sword-hilt set with crown jewels; all this makes people say that his Majesty has other designs besides those upon Holland.'

The envoy of the States, Hamel Bruyninck, did his best to keep up these alarms. Notwithstanding the cool reception he had met with he had never lost heart, and his intimacy with the Spanish ambassador, the Marquis de Malagon, helped to give force to his representations. He had not waited for the invasion of the United Provinces to offer subsidies for the despatch of a body of Imperial troops to the neighbourhood of the Rhine as soon as the French army had taken the field. This force he considered should consist of 6,000 foot and 6,000 horse, for whose payment the States-General undertook in part to provide. He nearly succeeded in persuading the Court of Vienna to follow the bold counsels of the Grand Pensionary and give orders for the Imperial troops to enter the Electorate of Cologne and effect a junction with the forces of the States

to seize the stronghold of Neuss, which the Elector had fortified and placed at the disposal of Louis XIV.

The active intervention of Baron Lisola, the Emperor's minister at the Hague, who was the avowed and indefatigable diplomatic adversary of Louis, was also of great service to the republic. Encouraged by the confidence placed in him by De Witt, he never ceased to point out in his letters and despatches the dangers which threatened Germany. His lengthy and powerful memorandum of December 30, 1671, in which he urged the necessity of Germany being on its guard against France, had great weight in the deliberations of the Court of Vienna with regard to its policy towards the States-General. He argued that the King of France, having crushed the United Provinces by war, or reduced them to helplessness by the conditions of peace, would not fail to make himself master not only of the Spanish Netherlands, but also of the banks of the Rhine, and would then give the law to the Electoral College. The States ought, therefore, to be saved from sinking in an unequal struggle, which would place the Empire at the mercy of the conqueror. Lisola enumerated all the offences that might be imputed to Louis XIV., and openly attacked his ambitious schemes. He represented at the same time the advantages of a military demonstration, by which the Emperor might profit, to draw closer the alliance with Spain now in league with the United Provinces, and to obtain payment from the States-General for the armaments which Leopold might employ against the Turks, should he have to repel an invasion from that quarter; 'otherwise,' he asserted, 'the Emperor would find himself, sooner or later, standing alone in Europe, and such isolation would hasten the downfall of the Empire.'

This persuasive appeal was successful. A few months later, at the request of the Dutch envoy, Lisola was authorised to open negotiations with the Grand Pensionary, whom from the beginning of their interviews he gave to understand that the Emperor, although he would not yet pledge himself to take up arms against the King of France, might intervene to defend the United Provinces against the aggression of the

Elector of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster. 'The only consideration for Vienna,' he writes in another memorandum, 'is whether war is preferred within the Empire and single-handed, or on the Rhine with the alliance of Spain and the United Provinces.' 'Time,' he adds, 'must not be wasted in deliberations whilst the enemy is acting; the moment has arrived for coming to a conclusion; very soon it will be too late.' By succeeding in convincing the Emperor of the necessity of an armed intervention in favour of the United Provinces, Lisola takes rank among the saviours of the republic. He lived to see its deliverance; dying early in December 1674.

Before making up his mind to such energetic measures, the Emperor was anxious to ascertain the dispositions of the German princes. Although they had been won over by French bribes, they were beginning to be alarmed for the independence of Germany. John George II., Elector of Saxony, who had long been in the pay of Louis XIV., was secretly negotiating with the States-General a loan of a hundred thousand crowns as the price of his assistance, and had become the most ardent champion of a warlike policy. His sons were openly raising levies for the States. The Archbishop Elector of Mayence, whose only object was to save Germany from the scourge of war, did not spare remonstrances to the French envoy, the Marquis de Feuquières, and declared to him 'that if he continued his conquests the King of France might excite suspicion both on account of his excessive power, and of his readiness to make use of it;' and De Feuquières, in his report of the Elector's sentiments, adds: 'It is inconceivable how some people talk about religion and some about German freedom, as if his Majesty had any design upon one or the other, or upon both together, and nobody notices the artifice with which both these drugs are sold in the same shop. One cannot say what effect may be produced in time.'

This change of opinion would not, however, have sufficed to move the Emperor, who, equally from education and character unacquainted with military affairs, had an insuperable dislike to enter into hostilities which he could not direct in person.

Leopold I. would doubtless have confined himself to long-drawn-out negotiations if the Elector of Brandenburg, by taking the initiative, had not in some sort put a forcible end to his hesitations.

Frederick William in fact had just pledged himself by the recently concluded treaty to come to the assistance of the United Provinces with a force of 20,000 men. The States-General were still represented at his court by Amerongen, who continued to serve their cause with devoted fidelity. Louis XIV. so feared his talents as a negotiator that, after the occupation of the town of Utrecht by the French army, he had been recalled, on the demand of the French king, as a subject of that province. But, strong in his attachment to his duties as a minister of the States-General, and fearing to cause the loss of their new ally, he refused to abandon his post, and took no notice of the orders sent to him to return. In vain he argued the justice of his refusal. Threatened with outlawry if he continued in office, he remained undaunted, and, when condemned to pay a crushing war contribution beyond his power to acquit, submitted to the pitiless destruction of his house and the devastation of his woods and gardens with the resignation of a Christian and a patriot. 'I have lost all that I possessed,' he wrote in the following year to the Prince of Orange; 'I retain only an unhappy wife and many innocent little children, who in the future will hardly have bread to eat; but since Almighty God has so willed it I must bear this evil with patience.' He bore without complaint the loss of fortune, and was ready to give his life for his country.

The efforts of a diplomatist who so courageously defended the interests of his country assisted greatly in gaining the Elector of Brandenburg to the cause of the republic. The position that had been given to the Prince of Orange, who, as soon as he was appointed captain-general, began to enter upon his ancestral inheritance, could not fail to encourage his kindly feelings. When thanking the States for his nephew's appointment, the Elector had promised to prove his gratitude towards them. The occupation by the French

army of the Rhine fortresses belonging to him in the Duchy of Cleves, Orsoy, Wesel, Emmerich, and Burik, which were garrisoned by Dutch troops, appeared to offer an opportunity for a rupture for which he had already prepared the way by the recall of Crockow, his envoy at the court of Louis XIV. He was alarmed at the dangers to which the independence of Germany might be exposed by the growth and neighbourhood of so formidable a power, and was resolved to do all in his power to oppose it.

In vain did Louis XIV., uneasy at the summons addressed by the Elector to the Protestant princes of Germany and the northern courts, attempt to intimidate him through the intervention of another envoy, Fromenteau, Count de la Vauguyon, who called upon him to explain himself as to the position in which he wished to remain with regard to the King of France. The Elector proved immovable; notwithstanding all threats, he haughtily replied that he knew of no right that Louis XIV. had to demand categorical declarations of him, and that, on the contrary, it was he who expected explanations and information on the subject of the entry of the French army into the Duchy of Cleves, where it was behaving as if in a conquered country. Count de la Vauguyon was obliged to take his leave, after a week spent in Berlin, without having received any satisfactory reply.

The Elector of Brandenburg thought himself no longer bound to observe vain measures of conciliation, now that he had secured the co-operation of the Emperor of Germany. Feeling that any intervention to which the latter refused his assistance would be foolhardy, he had despatched his brother-in-law, Prince John George of Anhalt, to Vienna immediately upon hearing that Louis XIV. had invaded the United Provinces. The Prince of Anhalt had married the second daughter of the Princess Dowager, and was thus, like the Elector, uncle to the Prince of Orange. But he had always declared himself in favour of the States-General, and had long been on terms of personal acquaintance with the Grand Pensionary. The Elector now instructed him to obtain from Leopold I. himself a treaty of alliance. The Prince was received

with a cordiality that augured well; 'his presence and his attachment to their High Mightinesses,' writes the Dutch envoy Bruyninck to the States-General, 'are of great importance towards a resolution being taken here that will be agreeable to you.' His urgent and repeated representations gave the required impetus to the Court of Vienna.

French diplomatic art had spared neither threats nor promises to check the Emperor in the course on which he seemed disposed to embark. 'At a great dinner,' writes Bruyninck, 'to which General Souchet had invited the Prince of Anhalt, a servant came to tell him that a gentleman in the suite of Monsieur de Gremonville wished to speak to him. The general proposed to his guests to invite him to come in, not wishing to let them think that any secrets were being discussed. The gentleman then declared that he was desired by his master to tell the general that having heard of the dinner party, and supposing that a toast might be drunk to the approaching war with the King of France, he sent him four bottles of his best wine, and assured the company that the king his master would not trouble himself for any toasts that they might drink, but that Germany would soon repent them when twenty thousand Swedes invaded the empire.' The French ambassador was profuse in promises that might moderate the warlike ardour that disquieted him. In accordance with the instructions sent to him for the purpose of reassuring the Emperor, he was to guarantee the faithful observation of the treaties of Westphalia, and respect for the territory of the empire, 'but was not to allow sight to be lost of the danger of arousing, on account of a private war with Holland, a disturbance which might affect the whole of Germany.'

The Prince of Anhalt had skilfully forestalled these measures and rendered them useless. After a second audience, granted to him by the Emperor, he obtained an Imperial rescript ordering Prince Lobkowitz, the prime minister, to conclude the negotiations. Lobkowitz, still faithful to the French policy, vainly endeavoured to procrastinate in his usual fashion. In order to cut short all further delays, the

Prince of Anhalt opened direct communication with the Emperor, and represented to him that he could not let slip this opportunity for rallying around him the disunited empire. The Emperor at once sent specific instructions to Prince Lobkowitz, who replied by the most exaggerated assurances of zeal, and talked of nothing but his ardent wish to spur matters forward. On the next day, the first consultation was held with Montecuculi, the president of the Council of War, who was to have the command of the forces. It took place at the bedside of the Chancellor Hocher, who was confined to his room with the gout. Four days later Leopold I. gave his entire assent to the proposed contentions, and the Prince of Anhalt, anxious to place himself in direct communication with the Elector, and to baffle the adverse manœuvres of the Chevalier de Gremonville, hastened back to Berlin, where the clauses of a defensive alliance were signed by the Imperial ambassador Baron Goes.

By the terms of this treaty, which Lisola lost no time in communicating to the Grand Pensionary, and of which the Emperor's ministers informed the Dutch envoy, Leopold I. and Frederick William renewed their recent engagements. They bound themselves to maintain the treaty of Westphalia and the internal tranquillity of the empire, to take up arms against all who might attack them, to place their troops at the service of that cause, and to obtain the adhesion of as many princes as possible to this league, which was to last for at least ten years. By its secret provisions, the two allies promised to put into the field 12,000 men each before the end of July, with all necessary equipments, the whole to be placed under the command of Frederick William. This treaty, which was apparently intended for the protection of Germany, was really meant to assist the United Provinces by the threat of a diversion. It enabled the Elector of Brandenburg also to place at their disposal the 20,000 men whom he had already pledged himself to send to their assistance by the treaty signed two months previously, and which had just been ratified.

The worst seemed to be over. Fagel, the secretary of the

States-General, hastened to send word to the Prince of Orange that the Elector's troops might, according to the assurances given by his ministers at the Hague, Baron Pelnitz and Romswinckel, be expected to enter the bishopric of Münster in about ten days. At the same time he communicated to the States-General the good news of the approaching arrival of this force, and of the treaty of alliance which the Emperor was prepared to conclude with the republic, and to which Leopold had pledged his word to his plenipotentiary Lisola. The States received this announcement as the first signal of their deliverance.

The Grand Pensionary was quite aware of the advantage that might accrue to the republic from this alliance. He had not therefore waited for the further progress of the invasion to declare to some of the foreign ministers 'that if the French army forced the passage of the Yssel, the province of Holland would be obliged to capitulate, and endeavour to obtain from the King of France the preservation of religion and freedom, without any consideration for the neighbouring states and sovereigns.' He uttered this warning cry that the echo might spread beyond the frontiers, and, although the loss of the Rhine fortresses did not as yet actually imperil the fate of the republic, he declared the United Provinces to be lost, in order to hasten the foreign intervention that had been promised.

The rapidity of Louis XIV.'s conquests left indeed no possible course open to De Witt but that of a temporising policy. The state of distress to which the United Provinces were reduced, until the inundations had restored some assurance of safety to Holland, was a sufficient justification for proposing terms of peace to the conqueror. As long as the road was open for his advance, the King of France could only be checked by the hope of obtaining from the States-General a treaty that should guarantee to him a portion of his conquests. To negotiate, and to take advantage of the negotiations to place themselves in a condition of defence, was the patriotic scheme which did honour to the Grand Pensionary's sagacity. He hardly flattered himself with the hope of obtaining peace from the

two hostile kings. His secret thoughts are shown us in a letter addressed to his brother four days after the resolution had been taken to make offers of submission. 'It has pleased their Noble Mightinesses,' he writes, 'to send a deputation to the Kings of France and England to obtain from them a statement of the terms and conditions on which the said kings might be disposed to treat with this State. I cannot imagine that there will be any good result, and I will let you know what happens.'

Although he did not deceive himself as to the success of the negotiations, De Witt considered them to be indispensable; but he feared the opposition of the Orange party, since the continuance of the young Prince's command depended upon the prolongation of the war. Though flattering himself that he should easily obtain the consent of the States of Holland, the Grand Pensionary foresaw that he might meet with resistance in the States-General from the other provinces, and particularly from Zealand, which was effectually protected by its marshes from any invasion by land, and was therefore less disposed to accept counsels of peace. It was needful, therefore, that he should convert to his opinions the principal adversary who might oppose them, the Secretary Fagel, who had now become one of the leaders of the Orange party. With this object he sought for the interview of which Wicquefort has left us an account, although there is no other document to confirm its authenticity.

According to him, as soon as De Witt heard of the passage of the Rhine, which seemed to leave the republic without defence against invasion, feeling convinced of the necessity of coming to an agreement without delay as to the conduct to be pursued, he called upon Fagel at four o'clock in the morning. He declared to him with more or less genuine consternation that he saw no means of preserving the republic or the province of Holland from the dangers that threatened them. Fagel replied that the republic had already been reduced to greater extremities, and that if God had formerly rescued her from the tyranny of Philip II. he would deliver her from slavery to Louis XIV., provided only that people would help

themselves by taking the necessary measures to check the enemy. He added that they should, therefore, take care not to abandon the helm before the vessel was on the rocks, and declared that he was ready to dare anything to bring her into harbour. He could not after this refuse to consent to the attempts at negotiation which the Grand Pensionary had in view. By thus alarming him with a show of discouragement that was probably more apparent than real, De Witt had gained Fagel to his schemes and made him more tractable.

A few hours after this interview, on the morning of June 13, the States of Holland assembled to take measures to provide for defence. Burgersdyck, the burgomaster of Leyden, at once made the first motion for overtures of peace by representing that the town of which he was chief magistrate could offer no resistance to the invasion. The despatch of envoys to treat with the King of France was then brought forward. No deputy opposed it. The members of the States of Holland had at first thought themselves bound to consult the magistrates of the towns; but the motion before them appeared so urgent that they determined to waive their objection.

The consent of the States-General remained to be obtained. Fagel had entered into John de Witt's views and had taken the necessary steps to dispose the deputies of the other provinces to acquiesce in the opinion of the States of Holland. Accordingly the debate already prepared by committees resulted favourably. Nineteen deputies were present, under the presidency of Dykweldt, the deputy of Utrecht. The deputies of Zealand contented themselves with declaring that negotiations must be opened with the King of England as well as with the King of France, in the hope that Charles II., as uncle to the Prince of Orange, would take care of his nephew's interests. One alone of the deputies of the province of Utrecht, Gisbert Van den Hoolck, in spite of his great age, protested vehemently against any proposal of peace. No other debate was raised, and by common consent deputations were sent alike to Charles II. and Louis XIV.

The States-General, being already represented at Charles II.'s court by their ambassador, John Boreel, who had not yet

returned from England, appointed Dykweldt and Halewyn to join him; Van Gemmenick, a deputy of Friesland, being suggested as a possible third. The two plenipotentiaries sent by the States to the King of England, fully justified the confidence placed in them. Cornelius Terestein Halewyn, one of the judges of the Court of Holland, an eminent lawyer, whose mind was cultivated by the study of history and ancient literature, was, according to Burnet, 'a man of great vivacity, he apprehended things soon and judged very correctly. He spoke short but with life, and was a man of severe morals.' Weede van Dykweldt, by his experience in the public affairs of the Assembly of the States, had acquired a profound knowledge of its relations with foreign courts, and his qualities formed the complement to those of Halewyn, by his great abilities and the insinuating smoothness of his temper, which gave him a great hold over the King of England's ministers.

In the hope of obtaining Charles II.'s mediation, or at any rate his neutrality, with the King of France, the States desired them to put before him the interests of the Protestant religion as well as those of his nephew, the Prince of Orange, feeling certain that he would defend them. But their mission had no chance of success. The secret agreement between the King of England and Louis XIV. was an insurmountable barrier to their embassy. The ambassador-in-ordinary, Boreel, to whom the States of Holland had in the first instance applied to know whether the negotiators would be received, could not make up his mind to despair of the English Government. Being obliged to communicate to the States the answer in which Charles II. declared that he would not negotiate without a preliminary agreement with France, he observed with naïve confidence that the King of England made no mention of refusing to receive their envoys. He could not, however, refrain from adding, 'The worst is, they may very likely be sent back, though at the risk of seriously displeasing the City of London;' and wound up with the confession, 'I have twice to-day been asked to leave, and the request has been repeated in writing.'

The success of the offers of peace to the King of England

were dependent upon the negotiations with the King of France. To insure a favourable reception, the States-General had been careful to choose plenipotentiaries who might be agreeable to the latter, and the choice was made with a view to disarming resentment. The two principal members of the deputation had both in turn served on missions and embassies in France, where they had succeeded in winning the regard of Louis XIV. and his ministers. They were John van Ghent, Lord of Oosterwede, who belonged to one of the principal families of the United Provinces, and Peter de Groot, late ambassador from the States-General to Louis XIV., whom the States of Holland had just appointed as one of their deputies in the States-General. Both were obnoxious to the Prince of Orange, who had never concealed his dislike to Van Ghent, his former governor, and he had an even greater antipathy to De Groot, one of the leaders of the republican party and John de Witt's greatest confidant, whose relationship to Montbas laid him open moreover to unjust suspicions of treason.

To reassure the Prince of Orange, the States-General named at the same time two other negotiators upon whose fidelity he could rely; Eck, deputy of Groningen, and Odyk, his chief councillor. Having obtained a safe-conduct and an escort, the plenipotentiaries started at once for the Castle of Keppel, near Doesburg, the head-quarters of the King of France. But there were but three left to fulfil the mission, one of them, Eck, having been objected to by the States of Groningen.

They arrived at midnight, and early the next morning communicated to Louis XIV.'s ministers the letter with which the States-General had charged them, asking him to state his conditions of peace. They were received by Pomponne and Louvois, and requested to state what offers they had to make. They replied that the States would think themselves wanting in the respect they owed to the King if they should propose any conditions before hearing his. This apparent submission did not soften Louis XIV. Two hours later Pomponne and Louvois, having received his directions, informed the ambassadors of the republic that the King declined to negotiate with them until they could produce full powers to conclude a

treaty. At the same time they gave him to understand that Louis, considering himself the master of the country he had already conquered, and flattering himself that he should soon be in possession of the territory he was about to invade, would not give up his conquests except in consideration of a suitable compensation. He looked to the States to indemnify him for the costs of the war, and further to give complete satisfaction to his allies. To this haughty language Pomponne added threats, declaring that if the States wished to avert total ruin, they had better make haste to negotiate. There seemed nothing left for them but capitulation.

On receipt of this discouraging answer De Groot, leaving Van Ghent and Odyk in Louis XIV.'s camp, hurriedly returned. Stopping on his way at the Prince of Orange's head-quarters, to inform him of the negotiations, he arrived in all haste at the Hague to ask for precise instructions and final orders. The States-General and the States of Holland were impatiently waiting for him. They were the more anxious and embarrassed that they were without their accustomed leader. The Grand Pensionary of Holland was unable to assist them with his counsel and advice at the very moment when the fate of the republic depended upon their resolutions. Four days before the return of De Groot, John de Witt, wounded in an ambush, and rendered incapable of fulfilling his duties, had been obliged to be temporarily replaced by his cousin Vivien, the Pensionary of Dordrecht.

On Saturday, June 25, 1672, De Groot made his report to the States of Holland. At the demand of the deputies of the nobles he was called upon to give his opinion. He represented the difficulties of a defence, the progress of the French King's conquests, the loss, either already consummated or soon to become inevitable, of the strong places of the Yssel and of the town of Nimeguen, and announced that Louis was expected at Utrecht and would no doubt soon make good his entry into Holland. He added that in making up their minds to negotiate, they might at least hope for the preservation of their liberty, their sovereignty, and the union of the seven provinces. The members of the Assembly were then each consulted in

turn. The nobles, through their spokesmen Van Dorp, Lord of Maasdam, and Wassenaar, Lord of Duvenwoorde, after thanking De Groot, pronounced in favour of the negotiations. They thought it best to be contented with assuring the independence of the republic, and subscribing to any conditions which would permit of its remaining intact. The town of Dordrecht, which had a prior right in the debates, demanded full powers for the negotiators, that they might in the first place obtain a suspension of hostilities, without which the safety of Holland would be imperilled. The deputies of Haarlem, Delft, and Leyden concurred in this opinion, each in turn setting forth the urgent necessity for an agreement. The deputies of Leyden warmly urged that the States of Holland should proceed in a body to the Assembly of the States-General, to induce them to accept without delay the position which now seemed inevitable.

This proposal had been almost unanimously accepted, when the deputies of Amsterdam, Van de Pol and William Becker, one sheriff and the other burgomaster, absolutely refused to agree to it. Emboldened by the security which the inundations afforded to their town, they expressed themselves amazed at the precipitation and weakness of the other members of the assembly, and added that in so important an affair it lay with the town councils to give their deputies the power of negotiating. They declared their intention of waiting until they had referred to the councillors of Amsterdam before giving an opinion, and wound up by pointing out the obstacles that would arise to the conclusion of peace if after purchasing it from the King of France they had to pay a ransom for the republic to his allies and to the King of England. This impetuous outburst threw doubt and uncertainty into the assembly. The deputies of several towns, although favourable for the most part to the proposals of peace, hesitated to take the responsibility of a definite vote, whilst those of Alkmaar resolutely made common cause with the deputies of Amsterdam in support of the opposition.

A fresh debate was demanded, and commenced at once. De Groot, being pressed again to give his opinion, persistently

urged that the welfare of the republic depended upon the continuation of the negotiations. He recommended the abandonment to Louis XIV. of Maestricht and all the towns forming part of the Country of the Generality, hoping that at this price, and in consideration of an indemnity for the cost of the war, Louis would allow the seven provinces to remain independent. 'I am persuaded,' he said, 'that the King of France will be content with less when he sees that much is offered to him.'

To bring round the opposition to his opinion, he informed them that Louis XIV.'s plan was to wait if necessary till winter had set in, and to avail himself of the ice to secure access to all the towns protected by the inundations, and that he might end by gaining possession of Amsterdam, 'after which,' he added, 'nothing is to be looked for but total submission and abject slavery.'

The nobles pleaded this opinion as a reason for an immediate resolution, as otherwise, they said, 'they should feel themselves obliged to ask for a safe-conduct for themselves, their wives, and children.' They repudiated all responsibility in the misfortunes which they foresaw if the States remained divided and irresolute as to the course to be taken. The deputies of Dordrecht, Delft, Haarlem, and Leyden laid the blame on the deputies of Amsterdam, alternately entreating and threatening them. The deputies of Delft deplored their obstinacy, and reproached them with forgetting that Amsterdam was not the whole of Holland, nor all Holland Amsterdam. The deputies of Leyden, continuing the debate, said, 'that if there was not time to consult the town councils, without danger of a fatal delay, it was necessary to be contented with getting the majority of the assembly to vote full powers to the negotiators. The deputies of Amsterdam remained inflexible. The proposals for peace seemed to them inadmissible. They declared that they had too much confidence in the patriotism of the town councils of Holland to fear that any of them would come to independent terms with the enemy, and, to set an example, they offered to go themselves as delegates from the States to the posts most threatened.

The deputies of Rotterdam, Enkhuyzen, Horn, and Monnikendam, continued to demand either a unanimous vote of the Assembly or the authorisation of their constituents. The deputies of Alkmaar also refused to yield, and, unwilling to give their consent without orders to too onerous a peace, they declared that they would rather die fighting the enemy than perish victims to the fury of the mob. The meeting then broke up, still in uncertainty as to the course to be pursued. On the urgent representation of Burgersdyck, the Pensionary of Leyden, the members all agreed to meet the following evening, with a promise to provide themselves with instructions which would allow of their arriving at a definite conclusion.

On Sunday, June 26, 1672, between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, the sitting was resumed with anxious gravity. The deputies of Amsterdam were absent. Foreseeing, no doubt, that the majority of the Assembly would take no heed of their opposition, they determined to take no part in a resolution which they intended to repudiate. The deputies of Horn and Purmerend, who had refused to give an opinion, and those of Schiedam and Edam, whose support had appeared certain, were waited for in vain. The Pensionary of Schiedam, Nieupoort, was detained by the townspeople, who had violently opposed his return to prevent his voting in favour of peace. Amongst the members present on the other hand the deputies of Rotterdam, who had hitherto held back, brought favourable instructions in spite of the threatened violence of the mob; and the deputies of Monnikendam, who had not yet spoken, also gave their consent. Those of Alkmaar, who had publicly supported the opinion of Amsterdam, also recognised the necessity of continuing the negotiations. All the deputies present consented to give their full authority for negotiating, excepting the deputies of Enkhuyzen, who objected, representing, though in vain, that the absence of the deputies of five towns, one of which was the most important of the province, made an adjournment necessary at any rate until the next day. With this exception the Assembly unanimously voted for making peace with the King of France.

This resolution was at once transmitted to the States-

General, who had assembled early in the evening, and did not seem likely to agree. The States of Zealand had already sent a deputation in the course of the day to the States of Holland to complain that they had not been first consulted as to the negotiations, and their delegates stated that they could not acquiesce without their approval. In the sitting of the States-General the ordinary deputies of Zealand made the same reservation and objected to any resolution. The deputies of Friesland, though not indisposed to the negotiations, also declared that their consent must depend upon the approval of the States of their province. The deputies of Groningen were absent. The deputies of the province of Utrecht stated that in the absence of any directions from the States of their province, who were unable to assemble now that their capital was occupied by the French army, they had no power to vote and considered themselves obliged to abstain. The deputies of Overyssel, whose province had been almost entirely conquered, merely observed that if peace were not made all would be lost. The deputies of Guelders alone made up their minds to express their decided consent. In this dilemma Holland, upon whom fell the chief cost of defence, and who had in a measure the republic under her charge since three provinces had passed into the hands of the enemy, did not hesitate to proceed, claiming the power of concluding the debate.

One last obstacle remained to be overcome. All resolutions before being put into execution had to be drawn up by the president, but Kann, the deputy of Friesland, who was presiding, left his place to prevent its being concluded. The deputies of Utrecht and Zealand, who had been presidents the preceding week, on being asked to replace him refused to do so. It became necessary, therefore, that one of the deputies of Holland, Adrien Wassenaal, Lord of Duvenwoorde, should preside. After having drawn up the resolution in the name of the States-General, he conferred full powers on the negotiators confirmed by the seal of the republic. The secretary, Gaspard Fagel, refused to countersign them, the resolution appearing to him an infringement of the rights of the States-General, who could not be bound by the votes of two provinces, and

he made his chief clerk, Spronnsen, replace him, to avoid any responsibility in the proposals for peace.

The powers given to De Groot and his two colleagues were apparently unlimited. They gave them authority 'to negotiate and conclude any treaty which they thought necessary for the service and welfare of the republic;' and the States expressly engaged to ratify the decisions of their plenipotentiaries. It was, however, understood in accordance with De Groot's own request, that a formal record should be entered in the Assembly of the States-General and in the Assembly of Holland, 'that the treaty of peace was subordinate to the preservation and re-establishment of the sovereignty of the seven provinces, as it had existed before the war.'

Two days later the States-General, to prevent any possible misunderstanding, had this declaration officially entered. Instructions were at the same time furnished to the negotiators in regard to the indemnity, with the result that the utmost limit was not to exceed 6,000,000 florins. In the condition of distress to which the republic was reduced, these proposals seemed the least burdensome and the least disastrous that could have been offered.

The very next morning De Groot was urged to hasten his departure. The Pensionaries of Leyden and Gouda, who had been the most inclined for peace, entreated him to start without waiting for the formal delivery of his commission, which would be forwarded to him without delay. After having received from the States of Holland 'a guarantee for his person and property,' in case of any persecution on the part of the opposition, De Groot hastily left the Hague to return to Louis XIV.'s camp, carrying with him as it were the destinies of his country. Such extensive powers, in such difficult times, gave him a heavy task to fulfil, and, as if it were not hard enough, threats were not spared to him. A violent scene took place between De Groot and Fagel, if we may trust the account given by Wicquefort, with whom De Groot kept up a close correspondence. 'You can go,' said Fagel, 'and sell your country for the highest price you can get, but you will not find it easy to put the purchaser in possession.' 'It is better,'

was De Groot's reply, 'to save a portion than to lose the whole.' 'It is no use,' added Fagel, 'taking any thought for the preservation of your lands; they shall be ploughed up, and sowed with salt, that no one may benefit by them, even to the third generation.'

But this dramatic account, which is unconfirmed by any of the letters between De Groot and Wicquefort, seems doubtful; it is, however, true, according to the plea by which De Groot four years later gained his acquittal, that Fagel attempted, though in vain, to dissuade him from accepting so dangerous an embassy. Moreover the Prince of Orange and Beverningh said to him, when he returned to the camp, that they would not accept such a commission as his. De Groot answered, in words which do him honour: 'The State is not so much to be pitied as long as she has some one ready to risk his life for her welfare.' The service which he rendered to his country in consenting to negotiate with the conqueror, was the more meritorious that he might well have been disheartened by the universal distress, instead of undertaking an attempt to carry through negotiations which were the only means of gaining time, and thus saving the republic. Beverningh, who seemed at first to disapprove of his mission, could not refrain from testifying to him how much he hoped for the success of his embassy. 'The deputies who are with me at the camp are in great alarm,' he wrote to him after his departure; 'I can only prevent their becoming disheartened by giving hope of an agreement. I beg you, therefore, to let me know immediately of anything you can tell me, that I may raise their spirits.' As to the Prince of Orange, he had endeavoured to profit by the offers of peace made to Louis XIV. before he availed himself of them as the text of an accusation against De Groot.

The Princess-Dowager had already presented a petition to the States of Holland, 'to obtain permission to accept the King of France's protection for her house and property at the Hague;' but the States, not wishing it to be supposed that they despaired of the republic, refused to grant it to her. On hearing from De Groot of the instructions which had been

given to him to negotiate with Louis, the Prince of Orange showed himself no less solicitous than his grandmother for his personal interests. After demanding the military pay due to him, he wrote to the States-General for authority to claim the King of France's protection to secure him in the possession of his dominions, especially the Lordship of Grave, which he thought seemed exposed to a speedy occupation by the French army. The States of Holland granted him this authority 'upon sufferance,' whilst De Groot had replied to Louvois, who offered him a protection for his country house, 'that he would rather see it set fire to, than be spared any evils which might be inflicted upon the lowest subject in the States.' At the same time, the Prince of Orange wrote a letter to Fagel, in which he desired him to ask the States-General 'that he might be permitted to negotiate with the King of France in his own personal interests.'

It was not the Prince of Orange, but the town of Amsterdam, which, after having been the first to advise resistance, set itself against the proposals for peace. On June 28, 1672, the Town Council assembled to hear the report of the deputies to the States of Holland, sent by the Pensionary Hop. They had returned to the Hague the evening before, and made it known that in their absence full powers had been given to De Groot to negotiate. The Council at once authorised them to renew their opposition. Some of the councillors, Valkenier, Backer, Andrew de Graeff, and John Corver, as well as the burgomaster, Henry Hoeuft, were moreover commissioned to draw up a form of protest. The council, on receiving this scheme, proudly proclaimed that instead of negotiating for Holland alone 'there ought to be a common agreement with the other provinces as to the means of resisting the enemy with courage and vigour, and preventing him from making another step towards these provinces.' 'We have thought it well,' wrote the burgomaster the next day to their deputies in the States, 'to communicate to you the unanimous resolution of the town, in which the burgomaster and the thirty-six councillors concur.' The Council having, moreover, decided to remain sitting, took occasion to notify to

the people in case of need that they had taken no part in the negotiations. Their determination to resist sufficed indeed to satisfy and tranquillise the inhabitants. It was publicly announced that all the councillors were ready to sacrifice themselves for the safety of the town, of religion, and of liberty, and that they would continue to defend them to the last extremity.

This determined resistance was no doubt encouraged by the eloquent and patriotic speeches, delivered, according to the historians of the time, in somewhat declamatory terms, by the burgomaster, Valkenier, and the grand bailiff, Gerard Hasselaar. The deputies of Amsterdam communicated this bold resolve to the Assembly of the States of Holland. They further protested by the angry voice of their Pensionary Hop against the resolution which in their absence had given free powers of negotiation to De Groot, and the next day they tried to bring round to their views those deputies who had not assisted at the last sitting of the States. But they remained alone. In fact, the deputies of Schiedam and Edam brought back the consent of their Town Councils to the negotiations. As to those of Purmerend and Horn, in spite of instructions to the contrary they easily allowed themselves to be convinced of the necessity for a treaty. In defence of the unjust accusation of weakness against the determination which had been come to by the assembly, the deputies of Gonda and Rotterdam, supported by the nobles, and the deputies of Dordrecht, Delft, and Haarlem, represented that the plenipotentiaries were not authorised to allow the territory of the Seven Provinces to be dismembered, nor even to dispose of an unlimited sum, and that the question now was how to save the republic by peace instead of allowing it to be ruined by war. The deputies of Amsterdam, taking these explanations into account, softened their tone; but in spite of strong remonstrances from the Pensionary of Leyden, Burgersdyck, they demanded that their opposition should be entered in the minutes.

The interests of the republic were fortunately as well served by the party favourable to the negotiations as by that which

opposed them. In fact they offered a means of safety if peace could be purchased at a reasonable price. It sufficed moreover for them to be entered upon to check, if not to arrest, the progress of the enemy. They would enable the States-General to wait for foreign aid, which thanks to their alliances they had at hand, and to provide means of defence if all hopes of an acceptable peace should have to be abandoned. The negotiations thus prevented the ruin of the United Provinces from becoming inevitable. On the other hand the opposition was not without its advantages: it was a safeguard against any temptation to make greater concessions and sacrifices than the republic could submit to, and prevented the acceptance of peace at any price.

However difficult the situation, all was not yet lost. A month had no doubt sufficed to place at the mercy of Louis XIV. the formerly flourishing and prosperous republic to whose arbitration four years previously he had had to submit. There had been few examples of so rapid a downfall, carrying with it at the first shock the power of a state which the greatest monarchies in Europe had latterly had to take into account. But the ruin of the republic, which had hitherto seemed imminent, was nevertheless averted. The inundations had prevented her destruction and she might await safety either in the continuance of the war which she was now in a position to maintain, or by proposals of peace which it was for her interest to enter into, if only to gain time.

Unable to prevent the disasters which had overwhelmed him, the Grand Pensionary had done all that a great statesman and a brave patriot could do to repair them. The government over whose destinies he presided could not avert the storm, but it had made a valiant resistance, and had succeeded in preventing the damage from being irretrievable. But having thus done the work, John de Witt was not to receive the honour. Power was slipping from his hands, whilst a cruel death awaited him. There was nothing left for him but to yield his place to the Prince of Orange, and the happiness of saving the republic was thus reserved for the last descendant of the stadtholders.

CHAPTER XIII.

A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT—THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STADTHOLDERSHIP, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

A restoration imminent—John de Witt considered as the enemy of the Prince of Orange—The public misfortunes attributed to him—His vain attempts to prevent or repair them—Vivien is assigned to him as a coadjutor in his office of Grand Pensionary—Attempted assassination at the Hague—His wounds—Condemnation and execution of Jacob van der Graef—His accomplices protected by the Prince of Orange—Cornelius de Witt in the same danger as his brother—General rising—Re-establishment of the Stadtholdership in Zealand—Sedition at Dordrecht—Resistance of Cornelius de Witt to the repeal of the Perpetual Edict—The example set by Dordrecht followed by the entire province—The States of Holland reduced to powerlessness—Proposal for a change of government—It is supported by the Council of Amsterdam—Reservations made on the subject of the nomination of the magistrates of the town—The Prince of Orange elected Stadtholder of Holland and Zealand, under the name of William III.—The States-General appoint him captain- and admiral-general for life—Congratulations sent to him—Letter from his grandmother—He is solemnly invested with his office—Great position made for him—Negotiations—Proposals transmitted by De Groot to Louis XIV.—Exactions of the King of France—Report made by De Groot to the States of Holland—Deliberations—Opinion of the Prince of Orange—Speech of Van Beuningen—Refusal to accept the King of France's conditions of peace—Measures attempted with the King of England—Secret negotiations entered into with Charles II. by the Prince of Orange—Offers made to him—He repulses them—Treaty of Heeswyck between Louis XIV. and Charles II.—William III. declares himself in favour of a continuation of the war—Declaration of the States-General—Secret negotiations continued between the Prince of Orange and the King of England—They are in vain—Letter from Charles II. to the Prince of Orange—Military operations—Progress of the King of France's conquests—Taking of Nimeguen—Louis XIV. checked by the inundations before Bois-le-Duc—His return to France—Resistance offered to the Bishop of Münster—Siege of Groningen—He is forced to raise it—Termination of the naval expedition—Holland saved by a storm from the landing of the enemy's troops—India ships brought back to port—Services rendered by Ruyter—Organisation of the defence—Financial measures: forced loans—Information furnished by De Witt—Increase of the strength of the army—Louis XIV. gives up the prisoners of war—Choice of com-

manders: restoration of discipline—The powers granted to the Prince of Orange restore confidence to the United Provinces—Necessity for foreign aid—Assistance from Spain—Negotiations with the Emperor—Treaty of the Hague—Co-operation of the Elector of Brandenburg: his junction with Montécuculi—Insufficiency of this intervention—It nevertheless contributes to the deliverance of the republic.

These public disasters, which roused to frenzy the popular irritation, could not fail to prepare and precipitate a change of government. The United Provinces, reduced to their last extremity, had to find a deliverer. The Prince of Orange appeared predestined for the post which had belonged to his ancestors. It seemed only right that he should inherit it; he had all the prestige of the past, which forms part of the life of nations. To the attractions of youth he joined a precocious gift of command. He was a man who could make himself obeyed by his impenetrable reserve, his immovable composure, his unconquerable obstinacy, and even by the curt and concise manner in which he gave his orders without allowing of any misunderstanding or discussion. The authority which he exercised as captain-general brought him very near to that which he coveted as stadtholder, whilst the restrictions, rather apparent than real, which were laid upon him, seemed to absolve him of all responsibility in the misfortunes of his country. He did not fail to profit by this position of affairs. 'Those who held the reins of government,' he wrote later to the States of Zealand, 'wished most unjustly to deprive us of the dignities which our ancestors held with such advantage to this State, and they further restricted to such narrow limits those which by special favour they were good enough to leave to us that we were thus incapable of rendering any service.'

The party which had remained faithful to the Prince of Orange, and to which was added those whom a desire for, or a prevision of, the change of government, rallied around him, suddenly put forward his claims as rights, and not content with asking for an extension of the young Prince's military power, by the conferring on him of the command of captain-general for life, with all the prerogatives that might appertain to it, they also claimed for him the civil authority,

requiring, in fact, the restoration of the stadtholdership, and showing themselves impatient to restore to him the power which was his family inheritance. Vehement complaints were made of the mistrust which had been shown to him in the instructions limiting his authority as captain-general, and the calamities of the war were laid to the charge of the insufficient powers placed in his hands.

'It was time,' said all those who took their watchword from the Prince's friends, 'to take his Highness out of guardianship, and to give the republic a chief with which it could no longer dispense, otherwise there was nothing to hope for.' The necessity for retrieving the disasters of the war by unity of action was appealed to, to put an end to the oligarchical government of the Dutch citizens, and insured sooner or later the inevitable ascendency of the military party represented by the Prince of Orange. There was but one man who could stem this torrent, swelled as it was by all the passions of the people. The Grand Pensionary had hitherto alone prevented the States of Holland from being deprived of their sovereignty by a change of government. During the nineteen years in which he had governed the republic, he had been enabled by the firmness of his conduct and the superiority of his intellect to surmount all obstacles, baffle all manœuvres, and preserve to his province a government without a stadtholder, as it had been organised by the Grand Assembly of 1650.

Scrupulously faithful to the oath which bound him to support it, he made resistance to the Orange party his first duty. Still, far from treating the young Prince of Orange as an enemy, he had always shown him the utmost respect and even affection. He had caused him to be brought up as a ward of the States of Holland, and had himself directed his education, until obstacles of every sort had been stirred up, and forced him to relinquish it. As the young Prince grew up, he had foreseen that the supreme command of the army must inevitably devolve upon him. Having made up his mind to offer no opposition to this, he determined at any rate to prevent his obtaining the powers of stadtholder, which

would have made him head of the government. The Perpetual Edict, which had abolished the stadtholdership in Holland, and forbidden any proposals of re-establishing it, and the Act of Harmony, by which the other provinces were obliged to make the office of stadtholder of the province incompatible with that of captain-general of the Confederation, were the barriers opposed by the republican party to all attempts at a restoration. De Witt, nevertheless, still held to a defensive policy. He had rather accepted than advised the Perpetual Edict, and had flattered himself that he could disarm the Prince of Orange's followers, not only by allowing him to be made a Councillor of State before he was twenty, but by promising him the command of the army as soon as he should have attained his twenty-first year. Unfortunately for him, he had not obtained any credit for this policy of conciliation. When concessions had become inevitable, instead of facilitating matters he had disputed them, thus adding fresh fuel to the hatred and ill-will of the Orange party.

He had, moreover, been deceived in his calculations by events, and the disasters of the war could not fail to bring destruction upon the government which he led. Every blow which could tell, in a struggle becoming daily more unequal, had fallen upon him. The rapid spread of the invasion was the signal for an explosion of implacable hatred against him, by giving an opening for working upon public credulity to his destruction. In spite of his resistance to the King of France, he was accused of being his accomplice, because he had not been able to shield the republic from conquest; and he was represented as being at the head of a great plot which had been long laid to give up the United Provinces to him, so as to prevent the Prince of Orange from becoming their governor. These calumnies were spread about in the most abominable pamphlets, whilst the preachings of many of the Calvinist ministers resounded in an appeal to violent passions.

'I have learned with sorrow,' writes De Witt some weeks later to Ruyter, 'the truth of what used to be said of the Roman Republic: *Prospera omnes sibi vindicant, adversa uni*

imputantur'—'Each one attributes to himself the glory of success, but public misfortunes are laid to one alone.' The Grand Pensionary seemed in fact to be solely responsible for the invasion, whereas it was really the States-General, or even the States of Holland, who had more than once evaded, or caused the failure of, proposals constantly renewed for placing the republic in a state of defence. 'If a stranger,' writes Conrad Droste, one of his contemporaries who did him justice, 'were to ask why John de Witt, the adviser of the country, took no precautions?—why the forts which might have defended her were not properly garrisoned?—the answer is, that discord impeded the execution of everything that he proposed. If he asked that a formidable army should be set on foot, or demanded the nomination of a captain-general, if he required the strengthening of the ramparts or wished to provision the arsenal, some impediment was always put in his way. No consideration was taken either of the limitation of his powers to the province of Holland, which moreover only left him the power of persuasion, nor of the often insurmountable difficulties in which he was involved, nor of the services he had rendered and which he still continued to render.'

Before war was declared, he had urgently advised that they should take the enemy by surprise and strike the first blow. His plan for an offensive campaign was to occupy Cologne with a body of troops, and then to attack the French magazines at Nuys. He had with no less energy attempted, though with as little success, to prevent the union of the French and English fleets; he wished to hinder it by sending the Dutch fleet up the Thames to renew the audacious attack upon Chatham. He had shown the same foresight in organising beforehand the measures necessary to insure the success of a defensive war; and had his urgent advice that the works for the fortification and inundation of Utrecht as well as of Holland been carried out, the former province would have been saved from invasion.

From the very commencement of hostilities, he had advised a close watch upon the enemy's movements, so that the army charged with keeping the too extended line of the Rhine

and the Yssel might be brought together at the first signal, to oppose the passage of the river, and he lamented that more could not be made of the sources of information which might have enabled the Prince of Orange to oppose Louis XIV.'s entry into the country. The first news of the enemy's victories did not dishearten him. He saw at once that he must content himself with defending Holland by recalling all the available troops at the service of that province, and further rendering it inaccessible by inundation, so as to form one vast entrenched camp of which Amsterdam would be the citadel. Such were the lofty plans of resistance which he sketched when he wrote that memorable despatch to Beverningh which is not one of his least titles to be honoured by posterity: 'We must consider Amsterdam as the heart of the State, by which succour may be carried to all its members, so that, under God's guidance, we may fight against the enemy for our country to the last man, and with Dutch constancy.'

The Grand Pensionary thus bore without wavering the weight of a burden which seemed as if it must crush him. He never let himself be cast down or discouraged by misfortune and injustice. 'I usually spend the whole morning after eight o'clock,' he writes to Beverningh, 'at the military committee of the States-General, and write to you in great haste, not having yet eaten anything, though it is nine o'clock at night. I pray Almighty God to give strength to you, and to all who are entrusted with the conduct of affairs.'

He was so overburdened with work, that the States of Holland resolved to relieve him of his overwhelming occupations, by commissioning his clerk, Van den Bosch, to take his place at his desk during the sittings, to hear the deliberations of the members of the Assembly and take notes of them. At the same time they authorised him to have the more important resolutions drawn up by his cousin and devoted friend Vivien, the Pensionary of Dordrecht. Having been sent as commissioner to Major-General Wurtz, Vivien was absent from the Hague, and De Witt hastened to recall him. 'The misfortunes of the times so overwhelm us with business,' he writes to him, 'and we have so little assistance on account

of the absence of many members of the different commissions, that their Noble Mightinesses are obliged to summon you here, both to help with all your power in the interests of your country, and to aid me in my individual work.' Vivien only arrived at the Hague to replace instead of merely to assist him. A few hours after writing the letter in which he urged his return, De Witt, wounded in an attack to which he nearly fell a victim, was obliged to abandon the government of public affairs. The passions let loose against him had provoked the assassin's dagger.

On Tuesday, June 21, 1672, although night had already fallen, he was working in his own room, near the Hall of Assembly, to finish his task and wind up in the evening the affairs of each day, according to the maxim which he both preached and practised. At the same hour were congregated in the neighbourhood four conspirators waiting to fall upon him.

The two sons of one of the judges of the Court of Holland, Jacob and Peter van der Graef, had induced Adolph Borrebagh, the Postmaster of Maestricht, and Cornelius de Bruyn, a corn merchant and lieutenant of one of the burgher companies of the Hague, to join them in their criminal attempt. Taking advantage of the absence of their father, who had gone to Delft to secure his fortune against the invasion, they invited their accomplices to supper and discussed with them the public misfortunes, which they imputed to the Grand Pensionary.

Whether their plan was premeditated, or whether they only yielded to a sudden criminal inspiration, they stopped before the pond which edges the Palace of State, under the trees of the avenue fronting it. The light which they saw in the Grand Pensionary's room decided them, on a remark from Borrebagh, to profit by the darkness and solitude to await his coming, and kill him in this ambush. Being nervous from fright, instead of attacking him all together, they drew lots for the one who should first strike him, and twice the choice fell upon Bruyn. Whilst they were deliberating, John de Witt quietly walked out of the palace

between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, to return to his house, which was situated close by. He was preceded by one of his servants, Van den Wissel, who carried a torch to light him, and was followed by his clerk, Reinier van Ouvenaller, who had charge of his despatch bag. The conspirators, protected by the shadow of the trees, were in possession of the road he must follow. When the Grand Pensionary had passed through the prison arcade they walked towards him. Borrebagh commenced the attack by suddenly snatching the torch from the hands of the servant who carried it, whilst Peter van der Graef, taking from the clerk the bag which he had charge of, prevented his going to his master's assistance. At the same moment Bruyn, in obedience to his instructions, threw himself upon John de Witt, and wounded him in the throat with his sword.

Although taken by surprise and unarmed, the Grand Pensionary had the courage and presence of mind to seize and overthrow the assassin. His accomplices at once came to assist and release him, and in this hand-to-hand fight they injured themselves whilst inflicting fresh wounds on John de Witt.

Jacob van der Graef struck him from behind with a knife, which, entering his shoulder, brought him to the ground with such violence that his head was badly bruised. The assassins, thinking that he was dead, retreated with all speed, whilst the Grand Pensionary, who was only wounded, had sufficient strength to get up and reach his house. The physicians of the States and the two surgeons Wilde, who were at once sent for, pronounced that his wounds were not mortal. He took to his bed with a raging fever, surrounded by every care bestowed upon him by his old father, his brave sister Joanna, the wife of Beveren, Lord of Zwyndrecht, and his eldest daughter Anna. Ever faithful to his duties, he conquered his sufferings to write a calm and simple letter to the States of Holland, in which, thanking God for having saved him from almost certain death, he gave them the most precise details of the attempt from which he had escaped, and begged them to excuse his fulfilling his office until he had recovered. The States of Holland on hearing of this attempted assassination of the

Prime Minister of their province sent him condolences, in which the principal members of the republic joined. Uneasy on their own account, and fearing a great conspiracy, they took all necessary precautions for their safety by calling out the burgher companies, who hastened to respond to their appeal.

They showed themselves no less vigilant in the pursuit and punishment of the crime. They ordered the Court of Holland to take all possible measures for the discovery of the criminals, had all the gates of the town closed to prevent their escape, and promised 5,000 florins to those who might denounce them. One of them, Jacob van der Graef, the judge's elder son, had already been arrested. Believing himself to be secure, and anxious not to arouse any suspicions, he had finished the night with his accomplices, in the house of the librarian, Van Dyck, where the assassins had retreated to get Van Bruyn's wound dressed. The next morning, borrowing a cloak from his host that he might not be recognised, he thought he could return without risk to his father's house, but he found it guarded. A physician who had been passing by at the moment when Graef turned to make sure that De Witt had been killed, had heard some one say, in a low voice, 'Graef, Graef, where are you? come quick!' As soon as he heard of the attempt he went to the Grand Pensionary, to whom he communicated this information, and orders were at once given that the approaches to the judge's house should be carefully watched. When Jacob van der Graef arrived thinking he should find the way open, he did not understand the signs made to him by some of the townspeople on guard, who wished to favour his escape. The marks of blood on him, of which he was not aware, sufficed to denounce him. After some useless explanations he was arrested and finally taken to prison, and confirmed the suspicions against him by entreating the burghers who were conducting him to let him escape. At the third examination he was obliged to confess his guilt, and gave the names of his accomplices. He was much disconcerted when his sword, which had fallen from his scabbard and had been

picked up at the place where the attempt was made, was produced. He declared that he 'could assign no reason which had led him to attempt this assassination, were it not that he had been forsaken by God,' and expressed his repentance. 'When I made up my mind to assassinate the Grand Pensionary,' he said, 'I prayed God to grant me success in my undertaking if the Grand Pensionary were a traitor, but to cause me to forfeit my life if he were an honest man.' There was no excuse for him but that of fanaticism, and he was condemned to death. His youth (he was still a student at the University of Leyden), the esteem in which his family was held, and the flight of his accomplices, who had succeeded in escaping from the Hague, awakened interest in his fate in spite of the indignation inspired by this cowardly ambuscade.

According to more or less doubtful accounts, which are unconfirmed by any evidence, John de Witt was urged by some friends to solicit pardon for the culprit from the States, so as to regain by his clemency the popular favour which he had lost; but the Grand Pensionary maintained his usual austerity and refused this application, saying that even if he were willing to forgive his assassin, he was none the less obliged to let justice take its course, that the security of the other magistrates might not be compromised by the impunity of crime. To this story may be opposed a contrary declaration, according to which no demand for intercession in favour of the condemned could have been addressed to John de Witt: the constant fever from which he suffered for more than a week not having allowed of his engaging in any business. However this may have been, the postponement of the execution of the sentence was not granted, and Jacob van der Graef died courageously, although the executioner of Haarlem missed his first stroke before he struck off his head.

On the day of the execution, it was necessary to guard the scaffold, and to take measures to prevent the country people from attempting a rescue at the Hague. The pastor David Amya, who had visited Jacob van der Graef in his prison, published an account of his captivity and of his execution, several thousand copies of which were sold within a few days.

In it he drew an infamous comparison between the assassin of John de Witt and the angel mentioned in the Bible who wrestled with the patriarch Jacob. The Grand Pensionary's enemies made use of this libel to put forward his assailant as a martyr.

The three other murderers had escaped pursuit. They had taken refuge in the Prince of Orange's camp and there found an asylum in spite of the researches of the States, who vainly appealed to the Prince, as well as to the chief officers of the army. 'We have this affair much at heart,' they wrote to him, 'and we are resolved to show our resentment to the authors of this attack on the person of our Prime Minister.' They even went so far as to denounce the secret protection which seemed to be shielding the fugitives from justice. 'We are informed,' they wrote, 'that they have taken refuge, either amongst the troops of the States encamped at Bodegrave, or in other quarters well known to your Highness.' These suspicions were well founded. Not only were the accomplices of Jacob van der Graef unmolested, but two months later they were able to take advantage of the general amnesty to return to their homes: one of them, Borrebagh, retaining his employment as postmaster, the reversion of which he obtained for his son; whilst the other, Bruyn, was chosen by the new Stadtholder to be one of the municipal magistrates of the Hague; their crime being thus scandalously recompensed.

A secret understanding seems to have pointed out both brothers for the assassin's dagger. Four days after the attempt made at the Hague against the Grand Pensionary, Cornelius de Witt, who had been obliged to leave the fleet in consequence of his sufferings from rheumatism, also nearly fell a victim to assassination. The day after his return to Dordrecht, in the early part of the night, four unknown individuals of suspicious and menacing appearance knocked at his door and asked to speak to him on important business. Being refused admittance on account of the lateness of the hour, they attempted to enter by force. But the burghers who were on guard for the night were summoned in time by the servants,

who had been enabled to run out by a side door and give the alarm. They came in haste and put the evildoers to flight, though unable to arrest them.

These criminal attempts against the life of the Grand Pensionary and his brother served to precipitate the general rising destined to re-establish the office of Stadtholder for the benefit of the Prince of Orange. This revolution had been skilfully prepared by false reports which had been spread to lead the populace into excesses. 'A rumour of the Prince's death having been bruited abroad at Amsterdam,' wrote Blaspiel, the Elector of Brandenburg's envoy, 'the people put themselves into the greatest excitement and wished to run to the Hague to take vengeance on those who were pointed out as his Highness's enemies.'

Zealand was the first to give the signal of the change of government, and the town of Ter Veere, of which the Prince of Orange was lord, took the initiative. On the very day on which John de Witt's wounds put him out of condition to continue the exercise of his functions, the inhabitants of Ter Veere assembled to demand of the members of the Town Council to vote in favour of the Prince of Orange, and they all either from fear or favour proclaimed him Stadtholder. The movement once set on foot spread through the whole province without meeting with any opposition. The people, in almost all cases, did but forestall the secret wishes of the magistrates, who, though not daring to break the agreement concluded with the States of Holland, were quite ready to allow themselves to be overmastered. The declaration of the States of Zealand in favour of the Prince of Orange had become inevitable when the rising of Holland made it superfluous.

A few days had sufficed for the example given by the inhabitants of Ter Veere to be followed by the town of Dordrecht, which more than any other seemed to be interested in preserving an inviolable fidelity to the government of the States. It was considered as a possession of John and Cornelius de Witt, who were born there, and who, either in their own persons, or through their relations and friends, had

hitherto ruled the Town Council. Its defection was, therefore, an irreparable blow to the republican party. The way was prepared by suspicions treacherously insinuated against the municipal magistrates. The deputies sent to the States by the Council of Dordrecht having advocated peace, the burghers allowed themselves to be persuaded that the councillors were already negotiating with the enemy for the capitulation of the town. They demanded of them, whether they were resolved to defend it in the event of its being attacked, and received for an answer that they would sacrifice life and fortune to resist an invasion.

This answer did not suffice to restore confidence to the inhabitants. An inspection of the magazines was required to ascertain the means of defence. The absence of the keeper, to whom they applied for the keys, gave the pretext for a cry of treason, which was repeated on all sides. In vain were the magazines subsequently opened, so that all could easily satisfy themselves that they were sufficiently provided.

The mob had assembled with the most hostile demonstrations, and the leaders who directed it gave the signal for an insurrection by hoisting two flags on the summit of the tower: one, orange-coloured, floated above the other, which was white, with this inscription: 'Orange op, Wit onder'—John de Witt's surname signifying white in Dutch. This play upon words was intended to serve as a war-cry against the Grand Pensionary and his party.

The council of magistrates was obliged to assemble in obedience to the injunctions of the populace. A workman stopped the burgomaster, Hallingh, who was trying to escape, and, hatchet in hand, threatened to brain him if he offered the slightest resistance to the will of the people. Not daring to remain faithful to the Perpetual Edict, which they had sworn to maintain intact, and fearful if they consented to set it aside of having to answer to the States for the violation of their oath the magistrates flattered themselves that they had found an alternative. They announced by sound of trumpet, that a deputation had been sent to the Prince of Orange to adjure him to come without delay to Dordrecht. They chose two

burgomasters, John Hallingh and John van der Burg, the secretary of the town, Orent Muys, two members of the Council, Graef and Van der Velden, two burgher-captains, and two citizens. The populace escorted them outside the town with cries of 'Long live his Highness!' 'Death to the bad magistrates!' The deputies having arrived at the Prince of Orange's camp at Bodegrave made known to him the commission they had received. Always careful to avoid compromising himself, the Prince, who was anxious to guard himself against any accusation of complicity with the sedition, began by refusing to respond to their appeal, alleging the necessity of remaining at his post. Dreading the explosion of the popular fury if they could not announce his arrival, the deputies urged him to start, and he yielded to their prayers, appearing to allow himself to be conquered.

The next morning, June 29, 1672, he made his solemn entry, in company with the members of the deputation, to whom were added John and Cornelius de Witt's brother-in-law, Jacob de Beveren, Lord of Zwyndrecht, councillor-deputy for the States of Holland. The inhabitants formed an escort for the young Prince, conducting him to the Town Hall, whither he proceeded on foot wearing his hat. The magistrates followed him with heads uncovered and warmly invited him to take his seat in the Council, but avoided suggesting any measures to him so as to make him responsible for whatever decision might be arrived at. They inquired if he had any proposal to make to them. The Prince, though surprised at their silence, concealed his astonishment and reminded them that he had only come at their request to hear what they had to say to him. They, without breaking through their reserve, thanked him for the honour he had done them in coming to the town, and invited him to visit the fortifications and magazines, hoping thus to delude the mob. But on the return from this inspection the inhabitants, fearing to be deceived, crowded round his carriage, and obeying the order given them by the pastor, Henry Dibbets, refused to let him go before he had secured the magistrates' votes.

The Prince having merely declared himself contented, the

more excited ones loudly demanded whether the magistrates had proclaimed him, declaring that they would soon get his father's office restored to him. To force an answer, a gun was levelled at one of the burgomasters who accompanied him. In vain did the latter, placing himself at the door of the carriage, endeavour to calm them by crying, 'Long live Orange!' The angry crowd would not be put off by mere words. They followed the Prince to the 'Peacock' inn, where the magistrates had prepared a repast for him, and threatened to massacre them if they did not bring in the bill for the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership in the Prince's favour. One of the rioters, entering the room and addressing the Prince, said to him, 'Let your Highness ask for anything he pleases, and we will see that he gets it.'

The magistrates, forced to yield and not daring to quit the inn until they had consented to give the satisfaction demanded of them, ordered the Secretary of the Council to draw up the resolution, in which they declared that in the name of the town they made choice of the Prince of Orange as Stadtholder. The Prince, who never forgot prudence, thought it well to call to mind the solemn oath he had taken on the day of his nomination as captain-general, vowing obedience to the Perpetual Edict. The magistrates were obliged to relieve him of his vow, through the pastors Dibbets and Verehem, who had distinguished themselves in the day's proceedings. The first act of the revolution was accomplished. In the enthusiasm, to which all yielded, there was but one solitary attempt at resistance. Cornelius de Witt, above all weaknesses, obstinately opposed the imperious demands of his fellow-citizens. When the resolution announcing the restoration of the Stadtholdership had been signed by the seventeen councillors present, it was observed in the crowd which had remained assembled that his signature was wanting, and his enemies would not let slip such an opportunity of humiliating him. He was still confined to his bed by illness, and to oblige him to ratify the resolution passed in his absence, the secretary of the town, Muys, was sent to him, accompanied by the captain of the burghers, Hoogewerf. After having read the Act he was required to

sign, Cornelius de Witt asked if the wording could not be altered, 'using less positive terms.' The answer being in the negative, he declared that he would be killed in his bed rather than give his consent. 'You may cut off my head with the sword you have at your side,' he said to the captain of the burghers; 'as for me, I have sworn an oath to the Perpetual Edict, and since I have not been relieved of it, I shall keep to it.' The captain having protested that he had not come as an assassin, he shortly answered, 'Whatever happens, I cannot sign.'

Nevertheless, the intervention of his wife shook his determination to refuse, by setting the feelings of the husband and father against those of the citizen. Maria van Berkel, fearing that her house would be broken into by the mob congregated before the door, and whom the captain of the civic guard could with difficulty restrain, felt her strong spirit quail. Although she had always given proof of a masculine intrepidity in the midst of the perils which had more than once threatened her husband, she now urgently pressed him to yield. Cornelius de Witt still resisted her entreaties. To overcome his refusal, she told him with despair that there was nothing left for her to do but to go away, for she considered that as a mother she must insure the safety of her children's lives.

Vanquished by her tears, Cornelius took the pen which his suffering hand could scarcely hold. He wrote his name, and added these two letters, 'V.C.,' which meant *Vi coactus* (constrained by force). The secretary, Muys, asked for an explanation, and begged him to scratch them out so as not again to arouse the fury of the mob. 'I shall not retract them,' he said, 'for without them I should not consent to sign.' While his wife was, unknown to him, effacing them, foreseeing this pious subterfuge of conjugal affection, he asked the secretary to draw up a report of his protest, of which he later secured a copy. He had placed himself in a position, as he himself proudly affirmed, of proving to the States, his masters, that he was no perjurer. The next day, Vivien, who had been authorised by the States to return to Dordrecht and use his influence as pensionary of the town in restoring order, inspired

by the example of Cornelius de Witt, signed the Act revoking the Perpetual Edict, but added after his name these words, 'as Pensionary,' so as to show that he only executed the orders of the magistrates whom in the discharge of his office he was bound to obey.

The popular movement in Dordrecht did not remain a solitary instance, but was like a train of powder spreading the fire. At Rotterdam, where the Orange party had secured the complicity of the captains of the civic guard, the disorder commenced by acts of violence towards the pensionary, Peter de Groot, and one of the deputies of the town, Van der Aa. On their return from the Hague to render an account to the magistrates of the resolution of the States on the negotiations with the King of France with which Peter de Groot had been commissioned, they were both denounced as traitors, and their lives placed in jeopardy without the members of the Council daring to order any measures to be taken against those who had assailed them. This impunity encouraged the plot which was being formed by the officers of the civic guard. At the first news of the insurrection of Dordrecht, one of them, Jacob Vossnaar, took advantage of the service which was assembling the inhabitants in the great church, had all the roads leading to it occupied by his company, and forced everyone as they came out after the sermon to declare whether they were partisans of the Prince or of the States.

An assembly was thus improvised to demand the nomination of a stadtholder. The pastor Borstius made a speech to them, and Naersen, one of the magistrates who had gone over to the Orange party, offered to transmit to the councillors the wishes of the people, whilst the Orange flag hoisted on top of the town belfry announced the change of government. Threatened with pillage and death, the councillors united together to pass the resolution, to which the burgomasters Pesser and Vivesy alone opposed a courageous resistance. The next day deputies were sent to the Prince of Orange to inform him of his nomination, and the burgomaster Vivesy, who accompanied them, did not shrink from telling him of the way in which the magistrates had been intimidated. He, displeased

no doubt at this bold declaration, or anxious not to go too far, met them with cold reserve. He received them near his camp at Bodegrave, without getting out of his carriage, in presence of Beverningh, and only replied that he accepted the office of stadtholder solely for the benefit of the State.

The same scenes were elsewhere renewed with more or less violence. At Schiedam the populace hoisted the Orange flag on the belfry, and the burgomaster, Nieuwport, was threatened by the rioters. At Haarlem the burghers exacted from the magistrates, who offered no resistance, a declaration of the Prince of Orange as Stadtholder. At Gouda, the house of the burgomaster, Reinier Kant, was besieged by women and children. The magistrates, to satisfy the populace, hastened to send their pensionary, Van den Tocht, to the Prince to assure him of a vote in his favour; which assurance they confirmed, by receiving him in the town when he responded to their appeal. At Delft, where the inhabitants remained faithful to their magistrates, the people from the country and the neighbouring seaports, under their ringleaders, assembled during the night, crossed the ditches on rafts, and scaling the ramparts burst into the town with cries of, 'Long live the Prince of Orange!' The magistrates, in dismay, not having at hand the civic guard, which was in garrison at one of the fortified posts, averted the dangers which threatened them, by giving their consent to the restoration of the Stadtholdership. Still, before notifying it to the Prince, they commissioned their burgomasters to go, unknown to the insurgents, to the States of the Provinces, to appeal to them for protection and obtain their consent.

The States of Holland found themselves disarmed and powerless. Assailed at once by the trials of a victorious invasion and of an imminent revolution, deprived of the direction of their Grand Pensionary, who was confined to his room by the wounds which had nearly cost him his life, they could no longer either stop or impede a movement which had become irresistible. The unanimous determination of every member of their Assembly would scarcely have sufficed to enable them to resist. It was already shaken by the impatience of all

those who felt themselves free to manifest henceforth their secret preferences, and whose interest it was, by giving proof of a tardy zeal, to assure themselves of the good graces of their new master. They were, nevertheless, checked by the fear of perjury; the Perpetual Edict, to which the deputies had sworn, interdicting in the most stringent manner any proposition for the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership. The deputies of the two towns most favourable to the Prince of Orange, Leyden and Haarlem, had been satisfied to propose an extension of his military powers. They claimed for him such perfect independence in his command as would free him from all subjection to the deputies in his camp, and demanded that the right of giving orders for moving the troops should cease to belong to the States of the Provinces. The States of Holland seemed disposed to make these concessions, hoping that they would enable them to escape the fresh exactions which they dreaded. But this was no longer sufficient satisfaction to the partisans of the Prince of Orange, and on the very day when it was unanimously voted they demanded a change of government.

They were encouraged in this by the absence of John de Witt, and the departure of Vivien, who had been recalled to Dordrecht. They had no longer now to fear that inflexible resistance which might have been opposed to them. On the contrary, they could count on the Pensionary of Leyden, Burgersdyck, who, failing the pensionaries of Haarlem and Delft, both also absent, would preside in the Assembly. They had taken care to ascertain beforehand how the motion, which was impatiently awaited, would be received. The commissioners sent to the Hague by the magistrates of Rotterdam to transmit to the States the resolutions which had been passed by the Town Council in favour of the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership, had asked the deputies of Rotterdam, who were still hesitating, to be the first to declare themselves, and had put themselves into communication with Burgersdyck. It was the latter who at the close of the sitting asked the members of the States to consider 'whether permission might not be given to a few of the deputies to make a proposal for

the benefit of the country, although it might be contrary to some resolutions now in force.'

This proposal was favourably received. A pretext was thus found for evading the oath taken to the Perpetual Edict, and the deputies could with impunity liberate themselves from the engagements it imposed upon them. The next day's sitting was clouded by bad news. Misfortunes were accumulating on the States. De Groot had just reported to them the inexorable conditions which Louis XIV. was determined to impose upon them, and which did not permit of their purchasing peace excepting at the cost of humiliation and dismemberment. They were entangled in the difficulty of having to decide upon a course to take, as to the acceptance or refusal of these severe conditions, when the news of the insurrection at Dordrecht, of the rising of Rotterdam, and of the violence exercised at Delft and Haarlem, succeeding each other like the dismal strokes of an alarm bell, gave the last touch to the consternation of the Assembly.

The time had been well chosen to hasten the development of the revolution which the States would now be forced to sanction. Encouraged by the first overtures made to the Assembly on the preceding day, the deputies of Rotterdam took indirect measures to hasten the debate which could no longer be delayed. The motion was brought forward by the burgomaster, Pesser, who had hitherto been looked upon as one of the principal adversaries of the Orange party.

He began by stating that he had an important communication to make on the part of the town, for the good of the country, which honour and law did not allow of his making public unless he received express permission to speak of it. There were only three of the nobility present in the Assembly, Duvenwooede, Asperen, and Maasdam. They affected surprise and demanded more precise explanations, but gave it to be understood that everyone ought to have perfect liberty to propose any resolutions demanded by the interests of the State. The deputies of Dordrecht, not wishing to act in opposition to the determined resistance of which their fellow citizen, Cornelius de Witt, had just set the

example, vainly tried to stem the current, stating that they did not consider themselves authorised to permit the discussion of an affair concerning which all deliberation was forbidden by law.

But they stood alone. The deputies of Delft declared that they considered themselves at liberty to express their opinion if authorised by their Town Council. The deputies of Haarlem, less timid, pronounced in favour of the demand of Rotterdam, representing the necessity of giving prompt satisfaction to the people, and the danger of refusing. The deputies of Leyden, with still greater boldness, set aside all the caution still shown by the members of the Assembly, and used no further evasions. The pensionary Burgersdyck represented in their name that it was useless to keep up any further pretence, and demonstrated that the aim of the proposal of Rotterdam was the abolition of the Perpetual Edict. He demanded that it should be taken at once into consideration, but added that he could not declare himself without having received instructions from the magistrates of Leyden, from whom he was only a delegate. This frank statement put an end to all uncertainty, and the deputies, proceeding to a second ballot, no longer hesitated to speak openly in favour of the abolition of the Perpetual Edict.

The nobility voted first for their exemption from the oath. The Pensionary of Haarlem, not willing to be forestalled, demanded that the nomination of the Prince of Orange as Stadtholder should be at once proceeded with, so as to avoid delays, which could but be prejudicial. The other deputies, for the most part more cautious, held back, but they agreed as to the dispensation from the oath, both for themselves and for the magistrates of the towns so that they also might be consulted.

To avoid any loss of time, it was agreed that the resolutions of the Town Councils should be communicated at the next sitting, which was fixed for two days later, and to which all the members of the States were solemnly convoked. 'There has been a very long debate in the Assembly touching an important point in regard to your Highness,' writes to the Prince

of Orange his chief confidant, Asperen, president of the councillor-deputies; 'I think that in three days your Highness will be Stadtholder. Eleven votes have already been given, and the rest are preparing. By next Sunday all votes will be given for your Highness. As I write your affair is rapidly advancing.'

It remained to be seen what would be the attitude of Amsterdam, which had not yet declared itself. Twenty years previously it had offered a determined resistance to the late Stadtholder, the father of the Prince of Orange, and had long remained the faithful ally of the republican party. But since the inhabitants had become so eager for the continuation of the war they loudly demanded a new government, so as to oppose an obstacle to any attempt at negotiations. 'It is time,' wrote a correspondent from Amsterdam to the French agent Bernard, 'that the magistrates should give up the Perpetual Edict, as the people are already collected to force them to it.' Moreover, the magistrates, who, in dread of a popular rising, had voted against the full powers given to De Groot to treat with Louis XIV., were disposed to allow themselves to be dictated to rather than to resist. The majority showed themselves most favourably disposed towards the Prince of Orange, in which they were encouraged by Van Beuningen and by Valkenier, who had become a warm partisan of the Orange cause. Still they did not venture to take the initiative in a proposal tending towards the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership, and they evaded sending a deputation to the Prince of Orange, as they had been required to do, by Councillor Outshoorn.

The cautious reserve of the chief burgomaster, Henry Hooft, supported by the sheriff, Bontemantel, and by Andrew de Graeff, John de Witt's uncle, gained the day for a temporising policy. The deputies from Amsterdam to the States having asked for instructions as to their conduct, the Council gave them to understand that they were to abstain from making any motion, and only authorised them to give a favourable vote in the event of the Assembly being unanimous. Andrew de Graeff, to whom the message was confided, being

denounced as one of the accomplices of the peace party, and suspected of having been sent to the Hague to ratify the proposals of the King of France, was near falling a victim to the popular fury.

This irritation calmed down the next day, when the Council, learning that the members of the States had relieved themselves of their oath, and had left the magistrates of the towns free to give their opinion, hesitated no longer. According to the unpublished report of the sitting, as it was reproduced by Sheriff Bontemantel, who was present, no debate would have taken place in the Council on the vote revoking the Perpetual Edict, if Valkenier, for the mere purpose of differing, had not proposed to nominate the Prince of Orange Count of Holland, but without making any change in the solemn decree which had abolished the office of Stadtholder. This would have re-established the Stadtholdership under another title, and with much extended powers, and would have made the Prince of Orange the sovereign of Holland. Valkenier not only proposed thus to evade the difficulty of revoking the Edict, of which he had been the principal promoter, but he flattered himself that his proposal would go farther than those hitherto made by the most avowed partisans of the restoration. He had already brought over several councillors, when Bontemantel strongly protested that it would only rouse fears and enmities, as the title of Count would seem to menace the liberty of the country. He added that the members of the States who were ready to come to an understanding on the appointment of a Stadtholder would inevitably be divided if any other proposal were made to them, and laid stress upon the necessity of their union for the welfare of the republic.

The magistrates of Amsterdam, allowing themselves to be persuaded, were content to order their deputies to support the demand for the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership, and desired them to spare no pains to obtain a unanimous vote.

Everywhere else the Town Councils hastened to give their assent to the proposal for the abrogation of the Perpetual Edict, and when the States of Holland reassembled on Sunday

night, July 3, 1672, they had only to sanction the vote of the magistrates. All the members of the Assembly, excepting those of Schiedam, who only arrived in the course of the deliberation, were present at the opening of the sitting. They were resolved, or resigned, to acknowledge the necessity of ending the interregnum of the House of Orange, which had lasted twenty years. In the absence of the Grand Pensionary de Witt and his coadjutor Vivien, the deliberations were conducted by the Pensionary of Delft, Van der Dussen. The debate once opened, no further objection was made to the dispensation from the oath, which was formally registered.

The re-establishment of the Stadtholdership was at once proposed by the deputies of Amsterdam; but although all the members agreed to it, there was great diversity of opinion as to the powers which should be given to the Stadtholder, and it was those deputies who had hitherto been most in favour of the Prince of Orange who now held back. Haarlem and Leyden demanded the preservation of the municipal privileges, and that the choice of the city magistrates should continue to belong to the councils. Leyden represented, moreover, that the States of Holland ought not to hurry their decision without a preliminary agreement with the States-General, who by the Act of Harmony had declared the two offices of Stadtholder and Captain-General to be incompatible. But the deputies of Amsterdam, through their spokesman, Andrew de Graeff, pronounced against any restriction or adjournment. They said that no half-measures should be taken if it was intended to give satisfaction to the people, and added that the slightest delay would imperil the independence of the country. 'The Prince of Orange,' writes one of their burgomasters, 'is certainly worth an army of 20,000 men.' They summed up their advice in these laconic words: '*Hodie constat, hodie agatur.*'

Notwithstanding this pressure, the deputies of several towns, amongst others those of Gouda, seemed undecided, and a few, such as those of Alkmaar and Purmerend, peremptorily refused to leave the Prince of Orange master of the municipal magistrates. Moreover, as the appointment of the magistrates was

not included as a matter of course in the legal prerogatives of the Stadtholder, and could not belong to him without a special resolution of the States, the deputies, for the sake of agreement, took the course of reserving the question of this extension of his powers.

The Stadtholdership was thus restored without sacrificing the liberty of the towns, and the deputies who represented the republican party could flatter themselves that they had at last effected a compromise which preserved them from too great dependence. It was, however, to be but ephemeral. With the exception of this matter of the choice of the magistrates, the States conceded to the new Stadtholder all the dignities which had belonged to his ancestors. The resolution which re-established the Stadtholdership in his favour put him at the same time in possession for life of the offices of Captain- and Admiral-General of the province.

The States decided that a deputation consisting of one member of the nobility and the burgomasters of ten towns of the province should be sent to him to offer him the first magistracy of the country, and at the same time to relieve him of the oath which he had taken to refuse it. On Monday, July 4, 1672, at four o'clock in the morning, the resolution of the Assembly was definitively voted, by which the Prince of Orange, who was not yet quite twenty-two, was proclaimed Stadtholder, and Captain- and Admiral-General of Holland, under the name of William III. Two days previously the States of Zealand, overruled by the will of the populace, had taken the initiative, and had re-established the Stadtholdership of their province in favour of the Prince. The other provinces could not follow their example: three of them, Guelders, Utrecht, and Overyssel, being partially conquered, and their States unable to assemble. The two others, Friesland and Groningen, had kept as Stadtholder, under his mother's guardianship, Henry Casimir of Nassau, the young son of their former governor. As to the States-General, they hastened to set the new powers of the Prince of Orange in harmony with the functions of commander-in-chief, as they were henceforth to belong to him.

On Friday, July 8, on the proposal of the States of Holland, under the presidency of the deputy Horenkom, and in presence of twenty-five deputies, they proclaimed the Prince of Orange Captain- and Admiral-General of the republic for life, leaving in consequence the army and navy of the United Provinces absolutely at his orders. They gave him, moreover—but only while the campaign lasted, and excepting on the territory of Friesland and Groningen, which were governed by their own individual stadtholder—the free control of the troops in garrison and of the town and country militia. Five commissioners from the Assembly, representing the provinces unconquered by the enemy, and whose deputies could therefore continue to sit in the Federal Assembly, were sent to inform him of the resolution which united full military authority to the civil power with which he was now invested. To the official congratulations addressed to him were joined those of his grandmother, the Princess-Dowager, happy in her old age that she had lived to see the last descendant of the House of Orange restored to the offices which had belonged in turns to her husband Frederick Henry and her son William II. 'I am one of those,' she writes to her grandson, 'who had longed to see you in possession of all the offices which the States have given you. I am sorry for you that it should be at this time when all is disturbed, but I hope God will help you. I wish you the patience and constancy of your grandfather, and I have no doubt that if you ask God for His help, He will bless you in all things.'

The young Prince also received expressions of satisfaction and encouragement sent to him by the old master who had had charge of the religious education of his childhood, Cornelius Trigland, now on his deathbed. 'I pray God,' he writes, 'that your Highness may remain seriously attached, as you have always hitherto been, to the Reformed Christian religion, and that you may follow the maxims of your illustrious predecessors. If I should never see you again, you will remember that I served you faithfully, and that I taught you the foundation of the happiness in which all the saints of the Old and New Testaments died, and which is reserved to your Highness if you

build thereon. I pray that God may bestow upon you the gifts necessary to fulfil your office worthily, that He may grant you length of days and give you grace, that He may cover your head in the day of battle, and crown you with glory and victory, that He may give you the mastery over your enemies and those who hate you and may bring you back in triumph, and thereupon I kiss your hands with all respect.'

The Prince accepted the turn of fortune which restored to him the inheritance of his ancestors with his habitual reserve. When he received the deputies of the States of Holland in his camp at Bodegrave, he preserved his usual habits of discretion, and only asked them whether he was relieved of his oath. On their answering in the affirmative he desired them to be the bearers of his thanks, promising to make use of his authority for the deliverance of the country and for the restoration of internal peace. The deputies of the States-General, who four days later presented themselves before him, found him ready to enter into possession of his charge; and the day following the resolution which they had come to announce to him, he went to the Assembly of the Confederation to take a new oath in his capacity as Captain- and Admiral-General for life. He was first received as Stadtholder by the States of Holland. At an early hour in the morning he was introduced into their Assembly with the ceremonial observed for his predecessors, under the direction of Vivien, who filled the office of Grand Pensionary, and of Duvenwoorde, one of the members of the nobility, accompanied by the deputies of Dordrecht, Amsterdam, and Alkmaar. Having been invited to seat himself on a velvet arm-chair at the upper end of the hall, above the seats occupied by the nobles, he was then conducted into the Court of Holland to be received as chief justice. With equal tact and prudence he abstained from making any speech, and on the same day returned to his head-quarters. 'Here is the whole government of the country changed in a fortnight,' writes one of Bernard's correspondents from the Hague. 'All now depends on the Prince's wishes. Being master no one will dare to contradict him. In him is now concentrated all that remains of power

to the States. He is a sovereign, only without the name.' Saint Evremond had foretold this revolution to John de Witt. In one of his works he writes, 'I remember having often said in Holland, and even to the Grand Pensionary himself, that the character of the Dutch was misunderstood. They would be afraid of an avaricious prince capable of seizing their property, or an ungovernable prince who would do violence to them, but they easily accommodate themselves to a prince of some sort. The magistrates like their independence that they may govern those who are dependent on them; all the people are disposed to submit more readily to the authority of a chief than to that of magistrates, who are in reality but their equals.'

This chief could be none other than the last descendant of the Princes of Orange. The United Provinces, threatened with being engulfed by the flood of an invasion, looked to him to save them. They had confidence in him notwithstanding his youth and military inexperience, and were not disheartened by the inferiority of the forces at his disposal against their enemies, and this confidence was amply justified. Scarcely twenty-two years of age, having hitherto studied war and politics only in books, William III. showed himself in his struggle against Louis XIV. as one of the great generals and one of the first statesmen of his time. Upheld both by patriotism and ambition, he brought to bear upon the public misfortunes the most intrepid courage, and at the same time the most immovable strength of mind, and by dint of determination not to despair for his country he became its liberator.

The change of government could not fail to encourage resistance, but it would not perhaps have sufficed to break off immediately the negotiations commenced by Louis XIV. It was the haughty and unreasonable demands of the King of France which caused the States to relinquish all ideas of peace and seek the deliverance of their country in war alone. De Groot, as soon as he had received his powers, quitted the Hague and repaired to the head-quarters of the Prince of Orange, before going to Rhenen to join the two other negotiators, Van Ghent and Odyk, who had been appointed his colleagues in his embassy. Odyk, not wishing as a Zealander to put himself in opposition to the

deputies of his province who had voted in the States-General against the continuation of the embassy sent to the King of France, thought himself obliged to make some reservations, and De Groot had only Van Ghent to assist him. The two plenipotentiaries, invited by Louvois and Pomponne to make known their offers, began by proudly demanding for their country the preservation of the sovereignty, the religion, and the union of the Seven Provinces, and proposed to cede Maestricht as well as the Rhine towns to Louis XIV., undertaking moreover to pay 6,000,000 francs towards the cost of the war. Louvois received these offers with disdainful haughtiness; he demanded how Maestricht, which the States-General would willingly have given up to avoid war, could be considered as a sufficient compensation for the three provinces of which the King of France was already master, and for those others which he was prepared to conquer. De Groot and Van Ghent, in spite of the opposition of Odyk, thought themselves now at liberty to use that latitude which their powers afforded to them. They offered Louis XIV. in exchange for the towns which he had conquered in the provinces of Overyssel, Guelders, and Utrecht, not only Maestricht, and the towns on the Rhine, but further all the towns directly depending on the territory of the States-General which were situated beyond the territory of the Seven Provinces either in Flanders or Brabant, such as Bois-le-Duc, Breda, and Bergen-op-Zoom, which formed as it were the girdle of the republic. They proposed to add a sum of 10,000,000 francs. Louvois replied that they were now beginning to talk sense, and promised to forward their communications to the King of France.

These proposals gave Louis the mastery over all the country separating the United Provinces from the Spanish Netherlands, from the Meuse to the mouth of the Scheldt. They thus paved the way for the inevitable incorporation of Spanish Flanders with the French monarchy, and insured the King of France his revenge against the Dutch policy, which four years previously had triumphed in the Triple Alliance. The aim of the long and skilful negotiations of French diplomacy was thus, if not attained, at any rate brought nearer,

and Louis might prepare to take up in no distant future the great schemes of Henry IV., of Richelieu, and of Mazarin, to extend the northern frontiers of his kingdom. Such concessions, in spite of the extremity to which they reduced the States-General, still left them a chance of some happy turn of fortune. No doubt, if their proposals were accepted they could no longer escape the dangers of the neighbourhood of France, and they lost the territorial guarantees which were their security. But they counted on the threat of a speedy invasion, to which the Spanish Netherlands swallowed up in the French possessions would be thus exposed, to alarm England and detach her from the French interests.

The States-General hoped thus to draw profit out of their sacrifices, to form later a fresh coalition against Louis XIV. which would hinder him from making himself master over the Netherlands, and would at the same time give them a chance of recovering that part of their territory which they had been forced to give up to him.

Still the King of France had so much to gain by the conditions of peace offered to him, that Pomponne strongly dissuaded him from making such demands as would be equivalent to a refusal. The hot-headed advice of Louvois, to which the King gave the preference, triumphed over this wise counsel. Fearing that he should be unable to follow up his projects against the Netherlands without breaking with England, Louis XIV. preferred first to complete the ruin of the United Provinces, instead of contenting himself with humiliating and weakening them. He thus sacrificed the aggrandisement of his kingdom to the ambition of dismembering and dishonouring a vanquished republic, by insisting upon conditions which could not have been harder if he had achieved their complete conquest.

The King's two ministers, in accordance with his orders, met the negotiators who had come to await them at Amerongen, near Utrecht, in the neighbourhood of the Castle of Zeyst, where Louis had established his head-quarters. Louvois announced to them the conditions to which the States-General were required to submit to secure the restoration of a few of

the towns of which the French King had taken possession, and to obtain the conclusion of peace. Louis considered the proposed abandonment of the territory called the Country of the Generality as insufficient, although the cession would make him master of all the possessions of the republic in Flanders and Brabant. He demanded that the frontiers of the United Provinces should be withdrawn within the Wahal as far as the Leck. He would thus have extended his dominions not only over the greater part of Guelders, but also to the island of Betuwe situated in the heart of the country of which he would have insured himself possession, from the Rhine at Arnheim as far as the territory of Holland, and even that would have been encroached upon by the annexation of the Castle of Loevenstein. He moreover pretended that he was acting for the benefit of his allies by giving up to the Elector of Cologne the town of Rynberg with some fragments of territory, and by assuring to the Bishop of Münster the possession of the principal districts of Overyssel. Finally the States were to cede to him the town of Delfzyl with its dependencies, and he proposed to make them over to the King of England, who would thus have in his possession the keys, as it were, of the province of Groningen. He offered the States as an alternative to content himself with the conquests he had made, provided he was compensated for those he might have made by the abandonment of the fort of Crèvecœur, of the town and mayoralty of Bois-le-Duc, and of the town of Maestricht. He thus required the States to despoil themselves.

The other obligations imposed by Louis XIV. were intended to put the finishing stroke to the submission of the republic, and thus make it the vassal of France. Had it only been a question of the public exercise of the Catholic religion, which Louis XIV. wished to place on the same footing as the Protestant faith, he would no doubt have been justified. But he made other exactions which were intolerable. He demanded the revocation of all the edicts detrimental to French commerce without any reciprocal compensation, the right of free passage for his subjects, who were to be exempted from customs or passport dues, and the conclusion within three months of a treaty of com-

merce, which should regulate the interests of the East and West India companies of France and Holland. He intended to use them according to Colbert's advice, to destroy the colonial power of the United Provinces. He moreover imposed upon them, as indemnity of war, the ruinous tribute of 12,000,000 florins. Lastly, to impress upon the republic the full force of a humiliation harder to bear than any sacrifices, the King of France imperiously demanded the envoy of a formal embassy every year, to present him as a sign of dependence with a gold medal, the motto on which was to be a humble thanksgiving to him 'for having left to the United Provinces the independence which the kings, his predecessors, had enabled her to acquire.' The full measure of outrage was thus filled up.

The deputies of the States could not conceal their consternation from Louvois. As they had received orders to negotiate, they made up their minds to argue the conditions offered to them, although they seemed impossible to accept. The King's ministers having promised to give them a final answer, they went to head-quarters to receive it, at the Castle of Zeyst, and it was made known to them the same evening at ten o'clock. The sole concessions granted by Louis XIV. were the diminution of the war indemnity, which was reduced from twelve to ten and a half millions, and the renunciation of the island of Betuwe, which he left to the United Provinces, consenting to give them as a frontier no longer the course of the Leck, but that of the Wahal, provided that all the fortified towns which defended the passage of this river were either dismantled or placed at his disposal. The deputies of the States could obtain nothing but these unsatisfactory and almost illusory concessions.

In spite of the urgent necessity for concluding peace, they cut short the conferences and, fearing to get too deeply involved, evaded any further proposals which seemed to be more compromising than advantageous. 'I think,' wrote De Groot later, 'this is one of the greatest services I have ever rendered to the States.' The ambassadors contented themselves with asking for and obtaining from Louis XIV. a delay of five days,

which would allow of their asking the States-General for a definite resolution.

The next day at an early hour in the morning De Groot, under the conduct of an officer of the French guard, started for the Hague, accompanied by Odyk, who, in consequence of instructions sent to him by the States-General, had no intention of returning. Van Ghent alone remained with Louis XIV. and the negotiations were thenceforth suspended.

Contrary to the provisions of Pomponne, Louvois was convinced that they would be again reopened. 'I hope,' he writes to his father, 'that by Monday night we shall know how we stand with our neighbours, and I am much mistaken if they do not sign anything they are asked.' Such was the general opinion. 'They have orders to do whatever the King wishes,' writes Pellisson, 'and they will be given credit for anything he does not ask of them.' 'The King will return Count of Holland,' writes Madame de Sévigné. 'My son says,' she writes in another letter, 'that everything has given way to the King, that De Groot has arrived to terminate the conclusion of peace, and that the only impossibility to his Majesty is to find enemies to resist him.'

Louis XIV. had at first appeared open to counsels of moderation, and had very nearly given way to the happy inspiration of his original impulse. 'The daily progress of my army,' he writes to De Gremonville, his ambassador at Vienna, 'puts me in a position to impose almost any conditions I please on the States, but I wish to listen to the promptings of my own generosity so far as is consistent with authority and the just rights of victory.' He allowed himself to be intoxicated by success without foreseeing the desperate resistance of the country he had undertaken to subjugate. In his account of the campaign of 1672, he did not hesitate to acknowledge his mistake. 'The proposals made to me,' he writes, 'were very advantageous, but I never could make up my mind to accept them.' He did not, however, think fit to excuse himself, and explained his conduct with a haughty pride which is not without grandeur. 'Posterity,' he writes in conclusion, 'may believe if it chooses in my reasons for so acting, and can at

its pleasure ascribe my refusal to my ambition and the desire for vengeance for the injuries I had sustained from the Dutch. I shall not justify myself. Ambition and glory are always pardonable in a prince, and particularly in a prince so young, and so well treated by fortune as I was.' But fortune was this time going to desert him, and unlooked-for dangers awaited him.

De Groot, having returned to the Hague on the very day that he quitted the King of France's head-quarters, found the States of Holland occupied in deliberating on the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership. He immediately informed them of the conditions imposed by Louis XIV., and urged them to make up their minds before the delay of five days granted to them should have expired. He contented himself in public with faithfully repeating his message without taking upon himself the responsibility of announcing his opinions, but in private he spoke without scruple, declaring that he would not be the last man to pronounce in favour of resistance. 'I would sooner die,' he said to Peter Schaep, councillor of Amsterdam, 'than accept such terms from France. The members of the Assembly, in despair at such a communication, did not dare to give an opinion until they had received instructions from the Town Councils, and took a copy of the report they had just received to send to them.

The sitting which had been suspended was renewed on Monday, July 4, 1672, and the two parties for peace and war once more found themselves opposed. Fagel, the secretary of the States-General, had worked incessantly to rouse a spirit of resistance. He wrote to the Prince of Orange: 'The greater number of the members for Holland say that they would prefer to die by the sword. The deputies of Amsterdam came to me to-day to tell me that they would defend themselves to the last extremity, and I do not see how it would be possible to patch matters up. As for myself, I would suffer death ten times over rather than become the miserable slave of France, leaving our posterity ruined body and soul. I say this to all whom I see.'

In spite of his interposition, some last efforts to come to terms with the King of France were made by the deputies of the town, in whose name the abrogation of the Perpetual Edict had been proposed. The Pensionary of Leyden, Burgersdyck, who had lately been noted for his devotion to the Prince of Orange's cause, represented 'that since there was no hope of regaining what the enemy had acquired, any sacrifice ought to be made to prevent the King of France from extending his conquests, unless they wished to remain without a country.

The merciless rigour of the conditions of peace had turned the ideas of the Assembly into another channel. The change of government which had just been accomplished could not fail moreover to encourage the advocates for war to the last. Whilst not giving up some vain hopes of agreement, the majority of the members who had most urgently demanded that full powers should be given to De Groot were of opinion that they could not consent to accept the proposed treaty. The deputies of Amsterdam declared themselves still more plainly, laconically observing, 'the sooner the negotiations are broken off the better.' They had still in their minds the remembrance of the last sitting of their Town Council, when the two magistrates who were most opposed to any concession, Hooft and Hasselaar, had disavowed their secretary Peter Schaep, who in an interview with De Groot had seemed to approve of the latter treating for Holland alone, leaving Guelders and Overyssel to France, should such an extremity be unavoidable. The Council had declared that they would have preferred not to receive such a report, and a few gave vent to their feelings on the subject of such speeches, threatening those who approved to throw open the windows, and call out to the people that they were being betrayed. To avoid such an extremity the magistrates, at the suggestion of one of the Council, Geelvinck, proposed that the Prince of Orange should first be consulted. This idea, which was put forward by the deputies of Amsterdam, found an echo in the Assembly of the States, and it was unanimously decided that before coming to any decision, time should be given for the new Stadtholder to make known his opinion. The next day, whilst De Groot was

being waited for in vain at the King of France's head-quarters, the Prince of Orange in a few words made known to the States that the conditions of peace did not appear acceptable to him, and that the frontiers of Holland might easily be defended if he received reinforcements. The States again resuming their deliberations set aside with one accord the proposals of the King of France, but nevertheless decided that they would ask the States-General to send De Groot again to Louis XIV. to offer him a new project of treaty, or in the event of a refusal to break off all negotiations. At the next sitting De Groot begged for more definite instructions. He reminded them that he had made full use of the powers given to him, short of consenting to impossible exactions; and finally demanded, if the negotiations were to be continued, the assistance of one of the deputies of the Assembly in conducting them. The nobles, in conjunction with the deputies of Dordrecht, Delft, and Leyden, offered him the assistance of Van Beuningen.

Thus forced to give his opinion, Van Beuningen suddenly changed the pacific disposition of the Assembly by absolutely refusing all participation in the proposed embassy. In an eloquent and vehement speech, a summary of which has been preserved in a manuscript of the time, he represented that Holland, far from gaining by continuing negotiations with Louis XIV., could only lose. She thus, he said, discouraged her allies, who feared to declare themselves in her favour, while she was trying to obtain a peace that would give them up to the resentment of the King of France. Spain, to whom the cession of the towns of the Generality appeared a first step towards the conquest of the Netherlands, would be dissatisfied. The irritation moreover of the other provinces, who had a right to complain that their consent to the treaty had not been asked, would be aroused, and Holland placed under suspicion and exposed to the accusation of abandoning the union. Lastly, popular seditions would be encouraged by giving ground for suspicions of weakness or treachery, and the last forces of the republic would thus be dissolved.

Van Beuningen, having moved the deputies by his reproaches, showed himself no less skilful in restoring their confidence. He dwelt upon the overtures already made to the King of England, and spoke of the great support given to the republic by the sympathy which the English showed for the Prince of Orange. He held out hopes of a mediation which should force Louis XIV. to modify his conditions, and which the latter would be unable to refuse without the risk of detaching Charles II. from the French alliance. He went on to promise the assistance of the Emperor, of the Elector of Brandenburg, and of the other German Princes, who would not allow France to become mistress of the republic. He pointed out that Louis' conquests were checked by the inundations, while they obliged him to weaken his army by numerous garrisons. He showed the danger of abandoning the conquered provinces to their fate, observing that if Guelders and Overyssel were left to France the enemy would hold in their hands the keys of Holland. Denouncing, therefore, as useless and dangerous, the despatch of an ambassador already doubted by the people, and whose mission would make the other provinces more distrustful than ever, he concluded by demanding that the conduct of the negotiations should be confided to the Prince of Orange. 'It is said,' wrote Pellisson from the French camp, 'that Van Beuningen is totally opposed to peace, and talks only of the Romans, and of the courage with which they defended their liberty.' The members of the States who had not yet spoken out were carried away by this speech, and declared themselves against further concessions. Not wishing to throw over De Groot, the majority of the Assembly, to prove their confidence in him, decided the next day, on the report of Vivien, that he should continue to fulfil the diplomatic mission to the King of France which had been confided to him, but at the same time desired him to represent to Louis the unbearable severity of the conditions of peace, which would not permit of their accepting them. Three days later, the States-General, at a sitting where only seventeen deputies were present, agreed to the proposal of the States of Holland, in spite of the protestations of the deputies of

Zealand, who held to their original instructions, by the terms of which they were forbidden 'to interfere in what had been done.'

The resolution of the States-General was rendered futile by De Groot's refusal to continue in his office. Being convinced that he could never again render any service as a negotiator, and threatened moreover by the assassins to whom he had so nearly fallen a victim in the streets of Rotterdam, he sent in his resignation, which was accepted.

The communications with which he had been charged were transferred to his colleague Van Ghent, who remained accredited to Louis XIV. 'to do his best in the interests of the republic.' This interruption of negotiations with the King of France was almost equivalent to a rupture.

Equally fruitless had been the attempt at a reconciliation with the King of England. An insurmountable obstacle had arisen in the treaty concluded between the two kings, which placed Charles II. in the pay of Louis XIV. Still the hope of detaching England from the French alliance was not altogether chimerical. Should the negotiations encourage the English to evince their discontent, it would be sufficient to arrest Charles and his ministers on the path upon which they had entered. With this view, and knowing how much uneasiness was felt in London at the increase of the French power, the States-General, as soon as Louis XIV. had crossed the Rhine, had despatched two of their deputies, Halewyn and Weede van Dykveld, on an extraordinary embassy to the King of England. They sent them to join their ordinary ambassador Boreel, who in spite of the declaration of war had not yet received his passport. Charles II. at once made their mission useless by taking measures to prevent their profiting by the cordial reception on which they counted from the people. On disembarking they were met by one of the King's gentlemen, who had orders to conduct them to Hampton Court, where they were strictly guarded and allowed no communication with anyone, nor could they obtain an audience. Although carefully watched they succeeded by means of their secretary, Kingscote, in entering into preliminary negotiations with the

Duke of Buckingham, who was beginning to show distrust of the French Government. As soon as Charles heard of this, he at once disowned his minister, assuring the French ambassador that he had taken the Duke of Buckingham to task for thus coming forward without any previous communication with the King of France.

The Prince of Orange, foreseeing the failure of the embassy which had been despatched to London, and wishing for some personal communication with his uncle, had also entered into a private correspondence with the King of England. He had commenced corresponding with him, before Charles had declared war against the States-General, through the intervention of a former gentleman-in-waiting of his mother's, Gabriel Sylvius, whom Charles had lately sent to the different German courts to try and induce them to enter into the alliance against the United Provinces. 'I have charged him,' wrote the Prince of Orange, 'to implore your Majesty to keep me some small place in your estimation, all my hopes of fortune being dependent on your kindness.'

Although Charles did not seem disposed to relinquish his projects in consideration of his nephew's appeal, the Prince of Orange did not lose heart. He confided a new mission to Frederic Reede, Lord of Renswoude, and lieutenant-colonel of infantry, in whom he had great confidence, and who was the more likely to obtain that of the King of England since his father, John Reede, a former president of the States of Utrecht, had, four-and-twenty years previously, represented the States-General at the court of Charles I. The Prince entrusted to him the following document, written by his own hand, which throws some suspicion on his conduct, and justifies the mistrust of the republican party, from whom, by his agreement with the King of England, he proposed to withdraw the government: 'In the event of your Majesty not being absolutely engaged to France, you can never have a better opportunity than this for getting all you wish from the States; and if your Majesty will let me know what it is you require, I will undertake to procure it, if it should not be absolutely opposed to the maintenance of the republic, in spite of the Pensionary

de Witt and his cabal, thereby placing them in the minority, and I and those of my friends in whom your Majesty can have perfect confidence will be placed at the head of affairs. Having thus obtained the conditions you require, your Majesty may always trust to this State, and I do not doubt, for my part, that you must feel convinced of my absolute attachment to your interests, so far as my honour and fidelity to this State will permit, which I am certain your Majesty would not have otherwise. No member of the government has any knowledge of this affair, and I implore your Majesty to keep it secret, assuring you that I shall be able to deal with any answer you may send me, and that I have no other aim in this matter than the interests of your Majesty.'

Charles was not unmoved by these advances, and although he showed no haste to respond, he did not intend to neglect to profit by them. The moment appeared a favourable one for him to intervene in the negotiations without giving offence to the King of France. Louis XIV. had just communicated to him the offers of peace made by the States, assuring him that he would take no notice of them until he knew his wishes in the matter. Charles II. took advantage of this to send Lord Halifax, a member of the Privy Council, the Duke of Buckingham, and the Earl of Arlington, with full powers to the King of France, giving Arlington his private instructions. Having carefully made known to his royal ally 'that he intended to carry on the war whilst distracting the attention of the people with hopes of peace to prevent them from forming leagues in favour of the Dutch,' he commissioned his ambassadors to find out how his nephew was disposed, and whether the two kings could count upon his complicity.

The States of Holland, trusting in the pacific assurances given them by the Duke of Buckingham during his visit to the Hague, yielded to the advice of Van Beuningen, who, in spite of so many disappointments, still clung to the idea of an English alliance. By a secret resolution voted on the report of the commissioners for the Triple Alliance, in whose name Hop, the Pensionary of Amsterdam, spoke, they pronounced themselves in favour of the opening of negotiations with

Charles II.'s ministers. The States-General, to whom they made known their resolution, at once gave their consent, and appointed as their representatives four new plenipotentiaries, Dykveldt, Van Beuningen, Beverningh, and Gokkinga, sending them to the Prince of Orange, who was desired to share the direction of the conference with them. Their instructions obliged them to refuse the cession of any towns or provinces to the King of England, but they were authorised to partially satisfy his pecuniary demands, and to work upon the well-known venality of his ministers by 'greasing the palms of those who might be disposed to serve the interests of the republic.'

Cutting short their sojourn at the Hague, where they had been received with public acclamations as messengers of peace, the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Arlington hastened to the Prince of Orange at the camp of Bodegrave, and arrived there as night was coming on, July 5, 1672. William III. at once made them proposals which he hoped would be favourably received, and summoned to the conference the commissioners of the States-General who had joined him there. The English ambassadors before coming to an explanation asked what offers they might transmit for the satisfaction of Louis XIV. The Prince begged them to persuade the King of France to content himself with Maestricht and the towns on the Rhine. The Duke of Buckingham promised to exert himself in this negotiation, and undertook the charge of the memoir which the Prince of Orange gave him for the King of France, whilst the Earl of Arlington with more sincerity forbore to encourage hopes of concessions. Having taken leave of the new Stadtholder, Charles II.'s two ministers went to Louis XIV., whom they found at the Castle of Zeyst with Lord Halifax and the Duke of Monmouth, who were expecting them. Forced to acknowledge that they would only expose themselves to a refusal by asking the King to modify the conditions of peace which he had notified to De Groot, they made no mention of the Prince of Orange's offers, and preferring to come to an agreement with Louis, hastened to arrange with him the preliminaries of a new treaty. To soften this disappointment to

William III. and show their regard for him as the nephew of their King, they made him an offer calculated to rouse his ambition. They sent two of their suite, Sir Edward Seymour, who became later Speaker of the House of Commons, and Jermyn, a nephew of the Earl of St. Albans, the former confidant of the Queen-Mother, accompanied by Sylvius, the Prince of Orange's messenger. By the terms of their instructions the hereditary sovereignty of the United Provinces was to be offered to William III. if he consented to give up to the King of England, as security for the treaty, those maritime towns which Charles II. demanded; and if, instead of contesting the King of France's conquests, he would put him in possession of the last remaining towns of the Country of the Generality, of which Louis had not yet possessed himself, such as Bois-le-Duc and Maestricht.

The Prince of Orange replied that they made this proposal four-and-twenty hours too late, as he could not violate the oath of fidelity he had just taken to the States of Holland and the States-General in his capacity as Stadtholder and Captain-General. With perfect composure he gave them a letter for Buckingham and Arlington, in which, whilst declining their offer, he thanked them for their proposals in his favour. But when the envoys had retired, he told one of his confidants that he would rather spend the rest of his days in hunting on his German estates than sell his country to France for any price that could be offered.

William III. was too proud to stoop to pick up a shred of power at the price of his honour. When once the destinies of the republic were placed in his hands he became their guardian. Secure in the direction of the government of the United Provinces if he saved their independence, he preferred if possible to remain the head of a State rather than resign himself to being a mere vassal of foreign sovereigns. The resolutions of the States of Holland, necessarily more condensed than the contemporary memoirs, have preserved no trace of the answer made by the Prince of Orange to the offers addressed to him. They merely state, according to a report of Van Beuningen, 'that he had exhibited much

astonishment, as had also the Commissioners of the States;' and that he had written to the Duke of Buckingham and to Lord Arlington to ask them 'to make known in writing the two Kings' conditions, that he might reflect upon them.'

The English plenipotentiaries, hopeless of obtaining the complicity of the Prince of Orange, resolved to convince him that he had no further consideration to look for from the two Kings, and that he would find them inseparably united, whether to achieve the ruin of the republic or to force him to submit to the hard terms of a conqueror.

With this object they rejoined Louis XIV., who had left Utrecht and was on his way to Bois-le-Duc, meeting him at the camp of Heeswyck, near Boxtel, and concerted at once with his two ministers, Pomponne and Louvois, how to strengthen by new conventions the engagements of the last treaty of alliance concluded between the two Kings. Charles and Louis entered into a mutual undertaking to make neither peace nor truce with the States-General without each other's consent, to communicate to one another any proposals which might be made to them, and to subordinate peace, not only to the conditions already announced to De Groot by the King of France, but also to the satisfaction of the King of England's demands, the full extent of which he had at last made known.

The terms which Charles II. tried to impose upon the States-General were: the lowering of the Dutch flag before that of England, even by entire fleets meeting a single English vessel in British waters; the repayment of the war expenses, amounting to 1,000,000*l.*; an annual rent of 125,000 florins for the herring fishery on the coast of Great Britain; and the recognition of William III. as sovereign of all that remained of the United Provinces after what might be detached from it for the King of France and his allies, or at any rate, in default of the title of sovereign, the Stadtholdership made hereditary to the family of the Prince of Orange. To insure their execution the King of England demanded that Sluys and the islands of Walcheren, Cadsand, Goeree, and Voorn should be given up to him, thus securing the entrance to Zealand and Holland. Whilst Louis XIV. and Charles II. were congratulating them-

selves on reducing the republic to the last extremities by strengthening their own agreement, the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Arlington desired Sylvius to go to the Prince of Orange and let him know of the treaty which had just been concluded, as well as the conditions to which the States-General must submit to obtain peace, and they requested that his answer might be made known to them within ten days. To take from him any hope of dividing the two Kings, they wrote to him: 'Your Highness will not take it amiss that, having observed how the deputies of the States sent to the two Kings had endeavoured to rouse their jealousy against each other, as if hoping to profit thereby, we are careful to send him a copy of the agreement which we have made with his Most Christian Majesty, by which the States will see how matters stand, and the steps they must take in future if they wish to make peace.'

William III. was making a tour of inspection of the fortifications of Holland when Sylvius rejoined him at Schoonhoven. As he was just sitting down to dinner, Sylvius wished to dissuade him from opening the despatches he had brought him until he had dined, giving him to understand that he would not be much pleased with them. Impatient to know the worst, the Prince broke open the envelope, and having read the letter from Charles's two ministers, as well as the treaty of the two Kings inclosed with it, very nearly threw the papers into the fire in a moment of anger. But he thought better of it, and seeing how he might be compromised by the conditions stipulated in his favour, should the States hear of them indirectly, he hastened at once to the Hague, so as himself to inform them of the communications he had received. On hearing of his arrival the States-General assembled in haste, and having listened to the proposals of peace which he read to them, the deputies asked him his opinion. The Prince of Orange purposely showed little inclination to give it, and thus induced them to be more pressing in seeking it. The Assembly no longer dared to decide for themselves, and wished to follow the course he might indicate. He therefore no longer hesitated to declare that he did not consider the offers of peace as

they were set forth in the letter of the English ministers to be acceptable, and would rather be torn in pieces than subscribe to the conditions imposed. He moreover denounced the provisions made in his favour as those, not of friends, but of enemies.

These proposals were at once remitted for consideration to the commissioners who had been appointed, and with whom the Prince of Orange was required to confer. After having submitted them to the ministers of the Princes allied to the republic—the King of Spain, the Emperor, and the Elector of Brandenburg—who advised their rejection, the commissioners unanimously voted for a continuance of the war.

The next day, the States of Holland, forestalling the States-General, hastened to decide, in conformity with the proposal already made by the deputies of Dordrecht, that they would abide by the opinion of the Stadtholder and the report of the commissioners. They were irresistibly drawn to follow the warlike policy which the Council of Amsterdam constantly encouraged by the most spirited manifestoes, and in favour of which the States of Zealand were at the same time urgently appealing to them. The States-General could not fail to follow this example. They met in the evening, and declared, 'that, in accordance with the very prudent counsel of the Prince of Orange, they considered the conditions proposed by the Kings of France and England so hard and unreasonable that they could never bring themselves to accept them, in spite of their wish for the re-establishment of peace, but that they must defend the State and its inhabitants to the last extremity, and await the relief which it might please God to give them.' 'The Prince of Orange,' writes Colbert de Croissy to Louis XIV., 'has not even deigned to answer the conditions under which your Majesty and the King of England were willing to grant him peace, but he has sent an extract from the register of the deliberations of the States-General to make it known that they refuse to submit to them.'

William III. nevertheless continued to persuade himself that by dint of tact he should eventually get the better of Charles II., and persisting in his illusions he demanded that the negotia-

tions with England might be continued. It was in vain that he sent Van Beuningen to rejoin the English ministers, who on leaving Louis XIV. had gone to Antwerp to embark for London. In vain he learnt that the latter, after having got rid of Van Beuningen, had only gone into the Spanish Netherlands to try and break the alliance of the United Provinces with Spain. Not rebuffed by the failure of the last proposals he had made to them, he did not despair of making Charles II. more tractable, by renewing direct communication with him unknown to the States. He was encouraged by the letters he had received from the King of England through his confidant, Reede van Renswoude. In the first letter Charles seemed to excuse himself for not having told him of the treaty of Heeswyck, which he had just concluded with the King of France, and sought moreover to justify that convention by very insincere allegations. He pretended that he had only put himself in a position of legitimate defence against the enemies of the Prince of Orange, whom he considered as his own; and spared no asseverations to convince him that he would never cease to consider his interests. 'I beg you to believe,' he adds, 'that I have ever the same feeling and the same consideration for you, as much on account of your merits as of the blood which flows in both our veins. I have not forgotten, either, any of the good offices your father did me during his lifetime, the recollection of which will remain ever engraved on my heart.' In the second letter he added to his empty asseverations promises no less illusory, expressed in these terms: 'If you will follow my advice, I have no doubt that I can put you in possession of that power which your ancestors always sought. I hope that as my nephew your ambition is not less.' The Prince of Orange profited by these overtures to try to prevent Charles II. from ratifying the treaty of Heeswyck, by granting him all the advantages that he could possibly desire. When Sylvius returned to London to announce publicly to the King of England the resolution of the States-General, who rejected the latest conditions of peace, William entrusted to him the secret proposals which were to be transmitted to his uncle; and his physician,

Doctor Rumpff, who had his full confidence, was commissioned to bring back the answer. The salute of the flag, the possession of the island of Surinam, an annual rent of 50,000 florins for the right of fishing, an indemnity of 4,000,000 florins for the cost of the war, the cession, as security, of the town of Sluys, and the sovereignty of the Seven Provinces for the Prince of Orange—such were the concessions and guarantees offered to the King of England by William III., according to a minute written by his own hand, if Charles would consent to conclude a separate treaty of peace with the States-General.

Did the Prince of Orange thus exceed the powers given him? Did he show himself thus conciliatory towards Charles II. with a view to obtaining an hereditary throne, instead of the Stadtholdership, which did not suffice him, under the condition only of being recognised as sovereign of the Seven Provinces without having to fear their being divided? He certainly did not disguise how much he wished thus to acquire a kingdom, even by placing himself in dependence on the King of England, when he wrote to Charles that in the event of his Majesty's once making up his mind to break with France he would only have to say how he wished affairs governed. In spite of appearances to the contrary, the Prince of Orange did not therefore hold to a policy of determined resistance, but was ready to lend himself to concessions provided he profited by them. However that may be, it must be acknowledged that the greatest danger threatening the republic was that of dismemberment, which could only be avoided by the rupture of the Anglo-French alliance. By trying to separate Charles II. and Louis XIV. at any price, the Prince of Orange was serving the interests of the United Provinces no less than his own.

The King of England, however, made the persistent advances of his nephew of no avail. Careless of the interests of his kingdom, and preoccupied solely with securing the benefits of the French alliance, he took no heed of the proposals which Sylvius transmitted to him. He not only hastened to make them known to Louis XIV.'s ambassador, but replied to William III. that, intending to remain faithful

to his engagements with the King of France, he should not swerve from his intention of obtaining as security not only Sluys, but the other places he had demanded. 'I claim them,' he wrote, 'for my own safety and equally for yours. I advise you to reflect well on what will happen to you if I have not a firm footing in the country to assist you against the designs and intrigues of those who, finding themselves henceforth debarred from the government they have been used to, are quite ready to call in a foreigner to overturn you and make themselves masters.' Whilst Charles II. was thus denouncing the Prince of Orange's enemies to him as suspected of negotiating a secret understanding with the King of France to regain possession of power, he was himself inviting William III. to be his accomplice by offering to give up to him the towns which would leave the United Provinces at his mercy. William refused to dishonour himself by such treachery. No longer able to disguise from himself that his uncle was irrevocably resolved to make common cause with the King of France, he abandoned for the moment the attempts at an agreement which he had vainly flattered himself would succeed with the King of England, since the Stadtholdership had been re-established in his favour. On the other hand, to put an end ostensibly to his nephew's proceedings, Charles gave permission for the departure of the two ambassadors of the States-General, whom he had kept at Hampton Court in as close confinement as if they had been his prisoners.

Nothing but the approaching meeting of Parliament could force Charles to change his tactics. He had not summoned it since April of the preceding year, in order to avoid the question of declaring war against the United Provinces, and had adjourned it to October 30, 1672, but it seemed that he could no longer avoid calling it together to obtain subsidies necessary for the continuation of the war. By refusing them Parliament would disarm him. The Prince of Orange still held, therefore, to the hope of imposing peace upon Charles II.; and persisting in his projects with a perseverance which no misfortunes could affect, he sent his correspondent, Reede van

Renswoude, to England. Charles at once took measures which rendered this new mission useless. He had all the ports in the kingdom closed under pretext of keeping secret his preparations for landing in Holland, and the Prince of Orange was thus deprived of all communication with his envoy. Scarcely had the latter arrived, moreover, than the King expressed his astonishment at having received no favourable reply to his last letters to his nephew; and wishing to leave no doubt on the matter, he made known to him through Lord Arlington that it would have been better to have dispensed with his voyage. At the same time Charles II. completed the measure of the Prince of Orange's disappointment by proroguing Parliament until February of the following year. Lastly, to leave his nephew no doubt as to his hostile intentions, he filled up his ministry, giving the office of Lord Treasurer to Lord Clifford, the declared enemy of the republic, and replacing the too scrupulous Bridgeman, Keeper of the Seals, by the bolder Ashley, created Lord Chancellor under the title of Earl of Shaftesbury. Ashley was the following year to inaugurate his ministerial functions in Parliament by applying to the United Provinces the words of Cato, '*Delenda Carthago*,' which he proposed to take as the text of his policy. Such was the final result of the Prince of Orange's vain hopes; the confidence which he had obstinately placed in the disposition of the King his uncle had been a delusion to the last. Thus the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership, in spite of the assurances which William III.'s partisans had so loudly given, had not succeeded in breaking the formidable coalition which threatened the independence of the republic. 'England is looked upon with much suspicion by those who had placed such reliance on her,' wrote a correspondent at the Hague to Bernard. It was as if in derision that Charles II. wrote to his nephew, 'that he as well as the King of France would have remained perfectly friendly to the United Provinces, if the deputies of those provinces had not been so backward in confiding to him that authority which his ancestors had so long and so worthily enjoyed.' It mattered little to him that William III. had now been invested with those offices which

belonged to him by right of inheritance; he continued to demand, more for the King of France's benefit than his own, the dismemberment of the United Provinces, without accepting any concession or contenting himself with the offers of submission which his nephew had caused to be made to him. The re-establishment of the Stadtholdership only brought disappointment to those who had expected a great diplomatic success.

Nor did the change of government suffice to give a new aspect to military operations. The appointment of the Prince of Orange could not immediately check the progress of conquest. Although prevented by the inundations from crossing the threshold of Holland, Louis XIV., in spite of the negotiations, did not arrest the victorious march of his army. He had ordered Turenne to continue the campaign in another direction, so as to put the finishing stroke to the submission of the whole of that part of the country comprised between the Meuse and the Wahal, hoping thus to complete the investment of Holland on the south.

The fortress of Nimeguen was in some sort the key to the position, and all the strength of the attack was brought to bear upon it. Well protected by its fortifications, and sufficiently provided to sustain a long siege, the town was defended by a garrison of 4,000 men, and had for governor an able commander, Van Welderen, lieutenant-general of cavalry. 'We hope and pray,' writes John de Witt, 'that a steady and determined defence of Nimeguen may repair what has been lost in power and reputation by the sudden surrender of the forts and towns on the Rhine. The burghers and garrison of Nimeguen are resolved to defend themselves gallantly.' Such were the patriotic hopes with which the Grand Pensionary inspired the States of Holland at the last sitting of their Assembly at which he assisted. They were speedily shattered. The fortress of Grave, which might have hampered the assailants by its neighbourhood, had been imprudently abandoned before the garrison had been recalled to defend it. Turenne commenced the investment of Nimeguen without encountering any obstacle. The capture of the fort of Knodsemburg, which

deprived the besieged of any hope of succour from the river side, placed the town at his mercy. Still, not having succeeded in making it capitulate by bombardment, he thought it necessary to lay regular siege to it. As soon as the trenches were opened, he renewed his attacks against the outworks, but was gallantly repulsed by the garrison under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel van Ghent, whose elder brother, Lieutenant-Admiral van Ghent, had nobly lost his life in the last naval battle and who was himself mortally wounded. The assault of the ramparts—three times renewed—was not more successful to the besiegers. The destruction of two bastions by undermining, at last gave them an entrance, and the colonels of the regiments in garrison, despairing of being able to defend it, forced the governor to surrender. The siege, which had lasted three weeks, had cost the enemy 1,300 men.

The capture of Nimeguen allowed the French army to draw nearer to Bois-le-Duc, which guarded the entrance to South Holland and North Brabant. To open the road Louis XIV. resolved to isolate the town. With this view he sent Chamilly's division from Maestricht to support that of Turenne, and employed them together for the subjection of the last remaining fortresses of Brabant—Hensden, Crèvecœur, and Bommel—which offered no resistance. It seemed now that the siege of Bois-le-Duc could be opened in all security, and Turenne repaired to the front, where he found Chamilly's division. He was joined by the King of France, who was bringing a portion of his troops from Utrecht, and who took up his head-quarters in the neighbourhood, at Boxtel. About 40,000 men were thus assembled in North Brabant, and the strength of this army corps, as well as the presence of Louis XIV., seemed to foretell to the States-General the continuation of the conquests which had been begun. This fresh blow which the King of France proposed to strike was, however, a failure, and Bois-le-Duc escaped its threatened fate. The garrison had just been reinforced by 1,800 Spanish soldiers; but the governor, Kirkpatrick, whose fidelity and courage were equally to be relied upon, was not even

called upon to offer any resistance, heavy rains, which lasted for four or five days, causing the marshes to overflow, and, isolating it in the midst of the waters, rendering it inaccessible to the enemy, all whose attempts were foiled.

Unable to complete his conquest, as the ground was failing under his feet, unable even to negotiate, since the Prince of Orange had rejected the proposals of peace, Louis XIV. had no further interest in continuing a war whose operations were reduced to reconnoitring and defence, until winter should render the inundations harmless. He gave the chief command of the army to Turenne; the governorship of Utrecht, with a corps of from fifteen to twenty thousand, to Luxembourg, who caused the country to feel cruelly all the evils of an invasion; the governorship of Guelders to Count de Lorge; that of the towns on the Rhine to Count d'Estrades; and sent Chamilly's division to watch Maestricht. He then departed for the camp at Boxtel on July 26 with his household troops, taking the direction of the Spanish Netherlands, which he had asked leave to traverse. The deputies of the States-General accompanied him, so as to reopen the conferences if there were any chance of the proposals of peace being renewed.

After a week's journey the King of France arrived at St. Germain. He was recalled by the necessity for resuming without interruption the direction of the negotiations intended to thwart the alliances being formed in aid of the United Provinces, which threatened him with a dangerous diversion. He wished, moreover, to return to his court in the freshness of his triumph to enjoy the adulation lavished on him. New medals were struck in his honour. One of them represented him mounted on the chariot of the sun passing rapidly through its twelve houses exemplified by twelve of the towns he had conquered. Paris had hitherto wanted such monuments as those with which the capital of the Cæsars had been enriched by its emperors. The capital of France now received its triumphal arch, and the gate of St. Denis was destined to perpetuate the remembrance of the King of France's victories, whilst the paintings in the gallery at Versailles formed an illustrated poem of the campaign which had illuminated his reign.

Louis XIV. had nevertheless been checked in his rapid success. The conqueror had been forced to retire before an unexpected obstacle—the irruption of waters summoned to the defence of the invaded country. Baffled in all directions by an impediment which it could not overcome, the French army had been forced to return to cantonments until the frosts of winter should open the barrier which now defended from invasion the last refuge of the independence of the republic. Being in possession of the advanced posts of Utrecht, Amersfoort, and Naarden, which threatened Holland along her whole line of frontiers, the troops received orders to do nothing further. 'Think only,' wrote Louvois to Luxembourg, 'of keeping the troops under your command in good condition to give battle to the Swedes at Christmas and Candlemas.'

The inundations which the Grand Pensionary De Witt had constantly urged, for which the States of Holland had diligently provided, and of which Amsterdam set a patriotic example, served henceforth as an impregnable rampart against invasion. The Prince of Orange hastened to profit by the new powers confided to him to insure their prompt completion. The waters soon extended over a vast expanse, and ended by reaching Bois-le-Duc, whose resistance contributed to the security of the territory of Holland. The French army was thus kept off wherever it might have forced a new passage. 'There is no town in Europe,' writes a contemporary, 'better fortified than the province of Holland is at this moment.' It was not by a victory, but by a great sacrifice, that of the soil given up by the inhabitants to be submerged in water, that the republic owed the few months' respite which gave her time to await better days.

The provinces of Friesland and Groningen, invaded by the King of France's allies (the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne) and reduced to their own resources, had taken measures to protect themselves. The steady resistance of the town of Groningen had saved them. Friesland, defended by a reserve of about 6,000 men under the command of the valiant Aylva assisted by Colonel Bampfield, was saved by the energy and resolution of the States of the Province. They followed the example of Amsterdam and

had the sluices opened and the dykes broken through. This series of inundations, protected by entrenchments hastily thrown up, rendered their territory unassailable.

The invasion having been thus diverted from its course, the shock fell upon the province of Groningen. The Bishop of Münster, leaving the Elector of Cologne at Deventer, sent his advanced guard under the command of Martel, his commissary-general, to occupy the posts which on the eastern side of Friesland might have arrested his progress. At the same time he despatched a detachment of French cavalry, which he had kept about him as an auxiliary force, to Drenthe, and employed it in investing the town of Coevorden, of which he must necessarily take possession before proceeding into the interior of the country. A week sufficed for the Bishop to become master of it, in spite of the gallant defence of its governor, Lieutenant-Colonel de Burum, who had under his command a strong garrison which was loyally supported by the inhabitants. But he was abandoned by his principal officers, who, as soon as a breach was made, voted for surrender and opened one of the gates of the town to the enemy.

The taking of Coevorden took the heart out of further attempts at resistance; all the towns surrendered with the exception of the little fort of Boulange, situated in the marshes, and commanded by the gallant Captain Prot; and the Bishop of Münster found no difficulty in approaching the town of Groningen, before which he was joined by the Elector of Cologne, and opened siege with an army corps of 22,000 men. The two traitors who had joined his camp—Broersma, the former governor of Coevorden, who, had he not been superseded, would have surrendered that town to the enemy; and Schulembourg, a former deputy of the States of the Province, who was eager to revenge himself for the shame of the sentence he had incurred by his venality—assured him that the town was only waiting a summons to surrender. Groningen once conquered, the two fortresses of Delfzyl and Emden, which commanded the mouth of the Ems, were at the mercy of the enemy, and the river would be open for the

English fleet to land a body of troops, which would insure the complete success of the invasion. Groningen was thus one of the last entrenchments of the republic. Its strategical position enabled it to defend itself. On the northern side it could oppose to all attack an impenetrable line of inundations, which left it in communication with Friesland and, by the Zuyder Zee, with Holland. It was thus secured against a complete investment. The States of the Province had placed it under the care of an able governor, Charles Rabenhaupt, Baron de Sukha, who had left the service of the German Princes for the army of the States-General and had been appointed Lieutenant-General to the Stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, the young Prince Henry Casimir of Nassau. He had at his command for the defence of the town 2,000 infantry under the Duke of Holstein, 400 cavalry, and a force of artillery numbering 200 guns. The stores and ammunition left nothing to be desired. The garrison was further strengthened by twenty-two companies of the burghers, comprising 2,000 men, and by a band of 150 students who rendered signal service throughout the siege. The Anabaptists, whose religion forbade the use of arms, undertook to destroy the shells and extinguish the fires.

Ably seconded by the inhabitants, who were themselves encouraged by their wives, Rabenhaupt repulsed with equal decision the insidious negotiations and surprises attempted by the enemy. Reduced to a regular siege, and unable to prevent the garrison from receiving the assistance not only of convoys of provisions and ammunition but of reinforcements of troops from Friesland and Holland, the Bishop endeavoured, without success, to overwhelm the town by the fire of his artillery, throwing in shells, some of which weighed as much as 600 pounds. Checked by the ditches, which the batteries had been unable to destroy, he vainly attempted, at an interval of some weeks, two attacks on the entrenchments and on the fortified posts which defended the dams. Not despairing yet of the success of a final assault, he exhausted all his projectiles in a cannonade which lasted without cessation for five days, but could not check the fire of the town or intimidate

the inhabitants. After a six weeks' siege he was forced to retreat by the losses he had sustained, the desertion of the King of France, and the fear that the army corps of the Elector of Brandenburg was threatening the security of the States. Groningen had made itself impregnable by a defence which was equivalent to a brilliant victory. This conquest having failed, the invasion of Louis XIV.'s allies was checked, and the two provinces which had seemed destined to fall victims to them were preserved to the republic.

But if the heroic resistance of the town of Groningen was to be of avail for the safety of the United Provinces, it was necessary that the fleet should remain mistress of the seas. It had been left under the immediate orders of Ruyter, notwithstanding the appointment of the Prince of Orange as Captain- and Admiral-General for life. Reduced by the naval disarmament to forty-seven men of war, twelve frigates, and twenty fire-ships, her mission was henceforth to protect the shores against a landing which appeared imminent. In fact, whilst England was deluding the States with fallacious negotiations, the enemies' squadrons, collected at the mouth of the Thames to the number of about one hundred and sixty vessels, and carrying on board the troops for landing, commanded by Count Schomberg, suddenly appeared before the mouth of the Meuse, off Brill. They passed without stopping before the beach at Schevening, where they dared not land, and made for the Texel. Ruyter came up in all haste with instructions directing him to avoid a fight and to confine himself to protecting the coast. At the same time the Prince of Orange gave orders to Prince John Maurice of Nassau to send a regiment of cavalry with all speed to the Texel, to the assistance of the companies of burghers and peasants who were gathered there. These defensive measures, supported by the batteries established on the shore, barely succeeded. The English fleet had sailed for the Helder, and their vanguard had been signalled from the shore, but being delayed by the difficulty of sounding they were soon dispersed by a tremendous storm which lasted three days, and was followed for three weeks by violent gales. After sustaining great losses, they were forced to return to the English ports to

re-equip. This retreat was a deliverance for the United Provinces which was looked upon as a sign of Divine protection, and celebrated with prayers and thanksgivings. Relieved from any fears of a landing, the States-General ordered Ruyter to return to Schoonveldt, at the mouth of the Scheldt, where the fleet, protected by the shallows off the coast of Zealand, had no cause to fear any attack.

They were soon required to put to sea again, and it was the States of Holland who managed to profit by their services, in spite of the hesitation and opposition of the other provinces and of the Prince of Orange. Being informed that the India convoy, comprising fourteen vessels with a cargo of 140 tons of gold, representing a value of six or seven million florins, was signalled as entering the North Sea, they immediately asked the States-General to bring the fleet up to the mouth of the Meuse, that they might be within reach of the expected ships. Having, not without difficulty, obtained an order for Ruyter to start, they learned by a letter from Van Oberwecke, who commanded the convoy, the direction which he was happily going to take. He had brought it round by the coast of England and Scotland to the mouth of the Ems, close to Fort Delfzyl, and thus escaped the danger of an encounter. 'Their India fleet,' wrote Arlington, 'passed ours in the night without being seen. This return, by encouraging them, will very likely prevent them becoming more reasonable.' But the India ships were not yet safe. The mouth of the Ems was guarded by no naval force, the English fleet might send in small vessels and fire-ships to destroy them, and thus avenge the disaster at Chatham. Moreover their cargo could not be discharged without danger near the fort of Delfzyl, whose fate was linked to that of the town of Groningen, which was still in a state of siege. If it was reduced to capitulate, the capture of the rich convoy from the Indies became inevitable. The States of Holland consequently proposed to the States-General to give Ruyter orders to meet it, and give it the escort of the fleet into the ports of Holland. The Prince of Orange, to whom the States-General communicated their intention, was of opinion that the naval forces must on no account be risked.

Without opposing Ruyter's departure, he advised the States-General to forbid his giving battle on behalf of the India convoy, and was not to be shaken in his opinion by representations made to him. The deputies of Zealand, exaggerating his caution, refused even to consent to the fleet being moved. Orders and counter-orders followed which might have been fatal and which placed the Admiral in a position of most anxious perplexity. Having arrived in the roadstead of the Texel, according to the last instructions he had received, Ruyter advanced as far as the Ems, whilst the Prince of Orange, uneasy at hearing of the concentration of the landing troops at Dunkirk, persuaded the States-General to recall the fleet at once to the shores of Zealand. The delays purposely created to this resolution by the States of Holland, happily prevented its being received in time. When Ruyter heard of it he had already brought the India convoy off the Texel, where he left it in safety, to return immediately to Schoonveldt, at the mouth of the Scheldt, the position which the Prince of Orange had never authorised him to leave. Three weeks later, the fleet, having more than once weighed anchor, in consequence of false alarms, returned to port. The approach of the stormy season not allowing of any renewed attack on the part of the enemy's squadron, only the frigates and fire-ships remained at sea to defend the mouths of the rivers against any surprise. The privateering which had been hitherto prohibited as injurious to the recruiting of the navy, and which the Prince of Orange with the approval of the States-General now authorised, served to protect the merchant service. The naval war, commenced by the battle of Solebay and terminating with the happy return of the India ships, could not be prolonged, but it had served to insure the safety of the United Provinces. Prepared for by the assiduous care of the Grand Pensionary de Witt, it had been gloriously carried out by Ruyter, nor could its success be attributed to the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership.

The work of deliverance remained none the less to be accomplished, and the undertaking lay henceforth with the Prince of Orange. The difficulties seemed almost insurmount-

able. Three provinces, Guelders, Overyssel, and Utrecht, were detached from the Confederation, and, on the demand of the States of Holland, the right of sitting in the Assembly of the States-General was withdrawn from their deputies, who could for the time being be considered only as subject to the King of France. The means of defence, for which in future Holland must almost solely suffice, seemed to be exhausted and could no longer even furnish the arrears of pay of the troops. It was necessary to have recourse to forced loans. They commenced by doubling the tax of a half per cent. with power to the tax-payer to pay the amount in plate or jewellery, and less the interest of forty per cent. guaranteed by the State. This increased tax seeming too great a burden, a second loan intended to replace the first was demanded on the same conditions, and in the form of a property tax. To collect it the States availed themselves of the information furnished by the Grand Pensionary de Witt, who, far from absenting himself from the sittings of the States since the attempt to which he had nearly fallen a victim, had never ceased to interest himself in public affairs. From 1672 to 1677 the forced loans produced 34,606,783 florins.

The military precautions required no less care, especially in regard to the insufficiency of the troops. The levies of foreign troops, which were with difficulty made up, and the utilising of the last remaining companies of marines and sailors, would not have sufficed for the army required by the Prince of Orange. It was Louis XIV. who actually provided it for the republic. Before returning to France he came to a resolution which proved fatal to his interests. Twenty thousand prisoners at least were in his power. Condé and Turenne advised their being employed in France in the works which were being carried on to make the South of France Canal; Louvois in an evil moment recommended their being released. He, however, proposed to detain the officers, and exacted from the men a heavy ransom, of which the States of Holland complained, but which the King eventually modified. With a generosity that was not without bravado, thinking that he had nothing to fear from the military powers of a nation

which he had so easily conquered, Louis contented himself with two crowns a head for the privates, letting the greater number go without any ransom. It was not long before he repented. 'I took my departure for France,' he wrote in his memoir on the Dutch war, 'having nothing to reproach myself with excepting the extreme indulgence which I showed to nearly twenty thousand prisoners of war by sending them back to Holland, where they formed the principal force which that republic has since employed against me. These unexpected reinforcements were soon augmented by the French deserters who were bought over by the inducement of better pay. 'Prisoners come daily,' writes Prince John Maurice of Nassau, 'to surrender themselves from the garrison of Naarden, so that we shall soon, as they say, have the whole of the Queen's and M. de Turenne's regiment. I am sending notice to them that they will be provided with passports and money to go on their way.' The States-General were enabled also rapidly to increase the number of their troops, which in the following year amounted to 92,000 men; namely, 12,000 cavalry, 2,000 dragoons, and 78,000 foot.

His effective force being made up, the Prince of Orange selected his new commanders for the fortresses which remained to the republic in North Brabant, summoned around him those officers on whom he could rely, though they did not all prove trustworthy, and dismissed those who appeared to be attached to the former government, such as John de Witt's faithful correspondent Colonel Bampfield. He used his power especially to re-establish discipline. The principal officers who had failed in their duty since the commencement of the war were treated with inexorable rigour, a few even being delivered over to the Provost-Marshal; but it was long before these examples of severity could quell the insubordination of the soldiers or the carelessness and neglect of those in command. The powers given to the Prince of Orange could not, however, fail to restore to the defenders of the country that patriotic impulse which had hitherto been wanting. Whilst the confidence which was daily increasing had caused a rise in the funds of the Province of Holland from thirty to ninety-

three florins, the correspondents of the French agent Bernard continually wrote that a determination was shown for a continuance of war, and that nothing less was contemplated than the retaking of Utrecht. 'The burghers and peasants,' they added, 'themselves demand to march under the Prince's orders—those of North Holland undertaking to furnish 30,000 men if he requires them.' Prince John Maurice of Nassau, who still remained in command of the chief position, that of Muyden, remarks upon the revival of patriotism in his correspondence with the Prince of Orange, with the cheerful ardour of a soldier, which his great age had not quelled.

In uniting its destiny to that of the last descendant of its liberators, the republic seemed to have cast aside all faint-heartedness. It felt itself supported by the hopes inspired by William III., looking upon them as services rendered; and in times of great danger such hopes are often the salvation of nations. Still it was not enough for the United Provinces to find a saviour in the Prince of Orange. For the success of their own deliverance they could not dispense with the foreign aid which was fortunately assured to them. Spain, not content with giving them the assistance of her diplomacy, added the most efficient military aid. Beverningh's negotiations had been happily completed by those of the new envoy of the republic, Adrien Paats, councillor of Rotterdam. The Court of Madrid not only sent a first reinforcement of 1,800 cavalry, which it placed at the disposition of the States-General, but gave full powers to Count de Monterey to dispose of all the troops in the Netherlands in their favour. Twelve thousand men, under the command of Count de Marsin, were sent either to the Prince of Orange's army or to the towns in North Brabant and the fortresses of Zealand, in spite of the complaints and remonstrances of the English ministers. It was in vain that the latter appealed to Count de Monterey at Antwerp: they could neither intimidate him, nor obtain his connivance in the perfidious suggestions of which the envoys of the republic at Brussels hastened to inform the States-General. The Court of Spain now looked upon the defence of the United Provinces as inseparable from the preservation of the Netherlands.

When in conformity with her bold advice the States had repulsed Louis XIV.'s proposals of peace, Spain was encouraged to make a still more determined stand and showed herself favourable to offers of an offensive alliance, but another year elapsed before she brought matters to a conclusion.

The negotiations were carried out with no less solicitude at the Court of Vienna, and thanks to the active intervention of Lisola, they were successful in spite of the treaty of neutrality signed by the Emperor Leopold I. with the King of France. After conferences prolonged at the Hague for several weeks, under the direction of the States-General's secretary Fagel, an agreement was made, by which the Emperor treating directly with the United Provinces was to furnish them, in return for certain subsidies, with a contingent of 24,000 men instead of 12,000 for which he had already agreed with the Elector of Brandenburg. He also undertook to call for a general armament in the empire, which was at once voted for by the Diet of Ratisbon. The French diplomatists flattered themselves that they could prevent the ratification of this agreement by manœuvring in Vienna to get Lisola accused of having exceeded his instructions, but they only succeeded in having the treaty delayed. After long-contested counter-propositions it was put into execution, but only towards the end of the year 1672.

Fortunately for the United Provinces, the negotiations previously concluded with the Elector of Brandenburg had already insured them the intervention necessary to their welfare. Not only had Frederick William agreed to furnish a body of 20,000 men, but he had obtained by the treaty of Berlin the assistance of a contingent of 12,000 soldiers of the Imperial troops, of which he persistently claimed an increase. The most urgent appeals were made to him to hasten his assistance: 'Your Electoral Highness alone can help us,' wrote the Prince of Orange to him, 'and for my part I can assure you that I will do my best to maintain our posts.'

The last attempt of Count de la Vauguyon, Louis XIV.'s minister at Berlin, failed before the henceforth irrevocable determination of the Elector. 'On August 6,' writes a con-

temporary, 'a report was spread in Woerden which filled the despairing inhabitants with joy, namely that a large number of auxiliary troops were arriving from Germany, which only served to confirm the old saying, *Quod Germanorum auxilia sunt lenta.* While the Imperial troops assembled at Egra, on the extreme frontier of Bohemia, were setting out on their march under the command of the finest general in the empire, Count de Montecuculi, who had conquered the Turks at Saint Gothard, the Elector of Brandenburg took up the command of his army corps, which was encamped on the outskirts of his dominions.

The allied contingents then manœuvred to approach one another, as if, as Louvois scornfully observed, they were coming to be beaten on the shores of the Rhine. The United Provinces by a prompt and united effort might look for a reinforcement of 40,000 well-equipped and well-armed men, which should suffice to place the French army in its turn in jeopardy. The hopes inspired by their near approach, of which D'Amerongen, the States' envoy at Berlin, spoke with patriotic enthusiasm, were but insufficiently realised. In consequence of the secret understanding which the French Government had contrived with Prince Lobkowitz, the Emperor's Prime Minister, the two army corps merely marched and countermarched on the opposite side of the Rhine without daring to cross it. Neither did the Prince of Orange seem in a hurry to take the necessary measures to insure their prompt co-operation, in spite of the reiterated complaints of the Elector. Their inaction prevented the immediate deliverance of Holland, but their attempt at a diversion nevertheless sufficed to change the theatre of war. Whilst the French King's allies, the Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne, whose States were threatened by the German troops, found themselves reduced to stand on the defensive, Louis XIV. was obliged to despatch Turenne to guard the Rhine, and would soon be forced to send an army corps into Lorraine under the command of Condé. The intervention of Germany forced upon him the necessity of dividing his forces, when their concentration was indispensable to enable him to complete

the subjection of the United Provinces. He was obliged to arrest his conquests until the day came when he had no resource left but to abandon them. The first foreign aid given to the republic had thus served to release it by turning the stream of the French invasion, and it was to the alliances brought about by the political foresight of the Grand Pensionary de Witt, rather than to the change of government just accomplished, that she was to owe her deliverance.

CHAPTER XIV.

REACTION IN FAVOUR OF THE ORANGE PARTY—ITS VICTIMS—ASSASSINATION OF JOHN DE WITT AND HIS BROTHER.

The Prince of Orange considers his powers insufficient—His partisans wish him to have the right of appointing the town magistrates—Meeting between Fagel and De Groot—Popular seditions—The States of Holland apply in vain to the Stadtholder—William III. endeavours to inspire doubts of them—Prosecution of Montbas—His escape—He offers his services to the King of France—Persecution directed by the Prince of Orange against De Groot, who is forced to leave the country—John de Witt surrounded by his family—He refuses to leave the Hague—Accusations formed against him—Correspondence of Louvois and of Luxembourg—No charge made against John de Witt of complicity with the enemy—Calumnious reports against his morality and probity—His memoir in justification approved by the States—He appeals in vain to the Prince of Orange—Ingratitude of William III.—His answer to John de Witt's letter—Cornelius de Witt is exposed to the same enmity as his brother—His domestic life—His correspondence with his wife, Maria van Berkel, during the last naval campaign—His services unrecognised—His arrest—He is accused of a plot against the Prince of Orange—Infamy of his accuser Tichelaer—Intervention of the deputies of Dordrecht in his favour—The Prince of Orange refuses to give an opinion—Cornelius de Witt transferred to the prison of the Court of Justice—Futile endeavours of John de Witt to obtain his brother's release—His correspondence with his sister-in-law—His visit to the Prince of Orange; he offers to send in his resignation as Grand Pensionary—His speech to the States of Holland—His appointment to the Grand Council—Ill-will of the Prince of Orange—Resignation of John de Witt—His letter to Ruyter—He is replaced by Fagel—Continuation of the trial of Cornelius de Witt—His imprisonment—His correspondence with his wife—Ineffectual pleas in defence—His judges and his trial—Pretext found for putting him to torture—Official report of the resolutions of the Court—Last interrogatories—Last applications—Cornelius de Witt tortured—His heroic behaviour—Refuses to confess—His iniquitous condemnation—He refuses to accept it—John de Witt summoned by his brother to the prison—Meeting between the two brothers—John de Witt is detained a prisoner—Plot of Tichelaer—Popular tumult—The councillor-deputies and the measures for defence—The troops of cavalry commanded by Count Tilly—Arming of the burgher companies—First parleys of councillor-deputies with the rioters—Seditious behaviour of the burgher companies—They send delegates to the prison—

Valiant resistance of Count Tilly—He is ordered to retire—The assassins—Verhoef at the Town Hall—The prison broken into—Preludes to the massacre—John and Cornelius de Witt dragged out by their murderers—Their assassination—Brutal treatment of their dead bodies—Their interment—Horror of the public—John de Witt's children placed in safety: his aged father survives him—Strength of mind of Cornelius de Witt's widow—Christian and patriotic sentiments of his family—John de Witt's papers—Justice is done to him—The share of responsibility incurred by the Prince of Orange—Suspicions roused against him—Contradictory accounts of his sentiments—He goes reluctantly to the Hague—Refuses to prosecute—His consideration and favour to the culprits—Persecution of the friends of the victims—Dangers to which Ruyter is exposed—New powers given to the Prince of Orange: services rendered to him by Fagel—Change of magistracies—Subjection of the States of Holland—William III. the liberator of the United Provinces—External decay of the republic—It preserves a liberal government, for which it is indebted to John de Witt.

William III. had been put into possession of the powers of his ancestors before he reached the age of twenty-two, not only to repair the evils of a foreign war, but to restore internal peace. Whilst nobly devoting himself to the patriotic work of defence, and taking advantage of the measures already in use to arrest the invasion, his authority failed him to quell the popular tumult and to arrest its violence. Although the States of Holland, who were as much in his favour as the States-General, had given up to him with the conduct of the negotiation the direction of all military operations, and had thus given proof of their confidence, he offered no opposition to the frenzy of the political reaction, which he rather seemed to encourage. He might have prevented John de Witt and his brother from becoming victims of persecution and assassination; he did nothing to save them, and allowed the accomplishment of the tragedy which was to stain with blood the beginning of his Stadtholdership. He was not content with the satisfaction of his ambition; and the powers with which he had been invested seemed to him insufficient so long as the nomination of the members of the town councils, which had belonged to his predecessors, was withheld from him. In spite of the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership, the right of recruiting themselves at their own free choice had been left to the magistrates.

The States of Holland were the more anxious to leave

them this important prerogative, that it was the foundation of the burgher and municipal oligarchy of which they themselves were the representatives. In fact the magistrates elected as their delegates the deputies of the States, and if these latter had not hitherto chosen that the nomination should be left to the Prince of Orange, it was because they did not wish him to become master of the Assembly.

William III.'s partisans did not consider the revolution which had just taken place as at an end, as long as it was not in his power to provide for the replacing of the town councils. The Stadtholdership as conferred by the States of Holland was a disappointment to them. They wished the new Stadtholder to be invested not with his lawful share only of power, but to take it by force entirely into his own hands. Their vexation was manifested in the interview which took place between De Groot and the secretary of the States-General, Fagel, who was in the Prince of Orange's confidence.

Meeting De Groot in the gallery leading from the hall of the States-General to that of the States of Holland, Fagel, according to the testimony of a contemporary writer, addressed him with these remarkable words, which would be inexplicable did they not reveal how deeply he regretted that the States of Holland should themselves have legally changed the government of the republic: 'You, no doubt, imagine,' he said to him, 'that by nominating the Prince of Orange as Stadtholder of the province you have made a coup d'état. But I would have been cut in pieces rather than consent.' 'He would have preferred,' adds Wicquefort, 'that the Prince should owe his advancement to the frenzy of an excited populace rather than to the lawful choice of the deputies of Holland.'

It was in vain that the States offered the Prince of Orange a pledge of their submission by tearing up the register of the Perpetual Edict, each leaf of which was restored to the deputies of the towns who had signed it. It was in vain that the magistrates of Amsterdam burnt the Act by which, five years previously, they had equally engaged to maintain intact that fundamental law of the State. Their protestations of fidelity and obedience, the overtures made to William III. by Hœufft,

the burgomaster of the town, with a view to supporting his nomination as hereditary Count of Holland, and the proposals of the deputies of Dordrecht that the States should promote his marriage and his choice beforehand of a presumptive heir to insure the continuation of the dynasty of the Princes of Orange, did not suffice to allay the passions of the populace.

Certain of impunity, they gave themselves up to violence and rebellion to obtain the dismissal of those magistrates suspected by the Orange party. At Rotterdam the captains of the burgher companies, having formed themselves into a council of war, demanded the arrest of the principal members of the magistracy who were accused of treason—amongst others Van der Aa and De Groot—with exclusion from the magistracy for their descendants. To shield them from the fury of the populace, they had to be guarded in the Town Hall. At Gouda, the peasants, objecting to the inundations, forced the gates of the town and kept the magistrates imprisoned for over twenty-four hours. The suspicions of connivance with the enemy, which were spread on all sides, kept up mistrust and increased the disorder. At Schiedam a false report that the subsidies had not been sent to the Elector of Brandenburg roused the mob, the council chamber was filled with angry women, the burgomaster, Pesser, was insulted, and his house pillaged.

Hatred and vengeance were let loose, more especially against the family of the Grand Pensionary; whilst his brother-in-law Deutz, one of the richest inhabitants of Amsterdam, not feeling himself any longer secure there, was obliged to seek refuge at Haarlem, and his first cousin Ascanius van Sypesteyn, bailiff of Broderode, head of the commissariat, was marked out by his relationship for the enmity of the people. A rumour having spread that the Grand Pensionary had left the Hague to demand hospitality of him, his house was ransacked before the archers of the town arrived to defend it. At Dordrecht, Cornelius de Witt, his brother-in-law Beveren de Zwyndrecht, the burgomaster Halling, and four other magistrates, were threatened with death if they did not resign

their offices. The burgomaster's house was pillaged, and the peasants, who were assembled round the town to the number of 3,000, wished by fresh deeds of violence to avenge themselves for the inundation of their fields. 'The friends of MM. de Witt are thinking of leaving the country,' was written to the French agent Bernard. According to another contemporary witness, 'there were people who, considering foreign rule as being less intolerable than anarchy, and that the tyranny of the mob was the most insupportable of all rules, would have preferred to submit to France rather than remain exposed to the insolence of an enraged and excited rabble.'

The States of Holland, who had flattered themselves that they could put an end to the civil dissensions by re-establishing the Stadtholdership, found themselves deceived in their hopes. Uneasy as to the fate which still threatened the members of the magistracy, they resolved to invite the Prince of Orange to take upon himself the office of peacemaker. In answer to their appeal, William III. published a circular in which he exonerated the town magistrates from all accusation of treason, demanding their protection, ordering that all those who had been arrested should be set at liberty, and enjoining the inhabitants 'to avoid, as an attempt against his authority, all tumultuous meetings and acts of violence.' This letter, which was at once denounced as a piece of complaisance and even as a forgery, did not suffice to intimidate the rioters. The States endeavoured to supplement it by publishing a notice against the fomenters of the disturbance, and by ordering the arrest of the leaders of the rebellion, at Rotterdam, Haarlem, and Dordrecht, as well as of those who had headed the resistance against the work of inundation.

Uneasy at the continuance of these disorders, before the States separated for a few days they made a fresh appeal to the Prince of Orange, sending him three members of the Assembly, Van Beuningen, Van den Tocht, and Van der Graef, to urge him to carry on in his own name the prosecutions which they had themselves directed. William III. evaded this request and replied that he had no power to repress, by severe penalties, revolts which were headed by the principal citizens. He advised

them to appoint deputies to whom they could give full powers for the re-establishment of order wherever it had been disturbed. This would have been to send them to certain death, and the States, without rejecting the idea, declared that the Prince alone could put it into execution by himself heading the deputation. But the Stadtholder objected the necessity of his presence with the army.

Fresh entreaties renewed a few days later remained useless. The Prince of Orange replied that, the troops being necessary for the defence of the frontier, he could not employ them in the interior, and that consequently the only method to adopt was that of kindness and moderation. He only interfered to prevent any attempt at repression, and fearing that the States might apply to Colonel van Beveren, who commanded the garrison of Amsterdam, he removed him and placed him at the disposal of Major-General Wurtz. He was anxious to disarm the States of Holland, and seemed rather to rejoice in their powerlessness than to be uneasy at it.

His conduct justified the prevision of those who had always doubted his sincerity The publicity given to the letter which he had just received from the King of England confirmed their suspicions. Writing confidentially to his nephew, for the purpose of deceiving him by continued asseverations of personal good-will which he pretended to feel towards him, Charles II. declared 'that the constant and insolent machinations of which the Prince of Orange was the victim at the hands of those who had formerly so great a share in the government of the republic, had obliged him to ally himself with the King of France for the sole purpose of lowering their pride.' Not content with this false allegation, he added that he was waiting to try and reconcile the King of France to the republic, 'until affairs were in such a condition that it would no longer be in the power of the same violent faction to destroy or set aside what had been done for the Prince of Orange.'

William III. had quickly seen the advantage he might derive from this correspondence in hastening the downfall of

those whom he thought he still had to fear. He took his measures for making use of it against them without compromising himself. 'I send you,' he writes to Fagel, 'the letter which I have just received from the King of England; you can communicate it or not as you think best.' He knew well that Fagel could not fail to make it known, to the great detriment of his adversaries. The Prince of Orange had so astutely calculated the force of the blow which would fall upon them that a month later, on the very day of the assassination of John de Witt and his brother, one of Bernard's correspondents announced as inevitable the resumption and success of the negotiations. 'The King of Great Britain will now,' he writes, 'be the one to think of peace, as he promised in his last letter to the Prince of Orange that he would do his best with the King of France, as soon as the faction which opposed him should be incapacitated from injuring him.'

To achieve the ruin of his adversaries, the Prince of Orange chose as victims those whom he could deliver over to the hatred of the populace. He had at first contemplated making Montbas responsible for the disasters of the war by taking his abandonment of the post which had been confided to him of guarding the Rhine as a premeditated act of treachery, although according to the report of the deputies to the camp his precipitate retreat could only be attributed to a misunderstanding. Withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Council of State—to which he was amenable as general officer—to be brought before a court-martial, Montbas, after having in vain pleaded that he had been deprived of his means of defence, was degraded from his military office and declared incompetent to hold any command. The Prince of Orange not being satisfied with this verdict and having refused to sanction it, a fresh sentence was pronounced by the court-martial, condemning the accused to fifteen years' imprisonment. This sentence still did not satisfy him, and he again referred the examination to the lawyers, declaring that from the nature of the accusation brought against Montbas his judges had only to choose between an acquittal or capital punishment. Montbas could no longer doubt the fate reserved for him, 'having

enemies,' as was written to John de Witt the day after his arrest, 'who only sought to deprive him of life and honour.' He bribed his guards and succeeded in escaping. Eager to exonerate himself, he applied in vain to the States-General to get commissioners appointed who could give him security of their impartiality, and before whom he undertook to appear. Not having been able to obtain this satisfaction, and driven to desperation by the confiscation of his property, Montbas, giving up all thought of his renown, offered his services in turn to the Prince of Condé, with whom he placed himself in communication at Arnheim directly after his escape, and to the Duke of Luxembourg, whom he joined at Utrecht, proposing to them both 'to facilitate the means of attack.' 'I have been desired by his Majesty,' wrote Louvois to Luxembourg, 'to write to M. de Montbas that he will pardon him on condition that in going to you he will assist you, by all the means in his power, both to harass the enemy at their posts and to sow dissensions amongst them. Montbas would have needed no pardon for having served against the King of France, whose subject he was by birth, if Louis XIV. had found in him an accomplice. He only made common cause with the invaders of the republic to revenge himself for the persecution to which he had been subjected. His conduct was none the less that of a traitor, and when he wrote to the Prince of Orange to ask his permission to call out the four general officers who had conducted his trial, the latter was justified in returning his letter by the Provost-Marshal.

William III. was implacable in his determination to ruin Montbas—even going the length of persecuting his wife, who had taken refuge in Brussels—because in striking him he also attained his brother-in-law De Groot, whom he could not forgive for being John de Witt's devoted friend, and one of the most faithful servants of the States' Government. In vain did De Groot, who had had no voice in the Perpetual Edict, show during his embassies in Sweden and France the most conciliatory disposition towards the appointment of the Prince of Orange, whether as Councillor of State or as Captain-General. In vain

did he show his deference to the new Stadtholder by becoming a member of the deputation of the States of Holland when they went to congratulate the Princess-Dowager on the position given to her grandson; he could not overcome an enmity which had become implacable.

It was De Groot's high position that gave special umbrage to William III. Possessing the confidence of the States of Holland and of the States-General, who had given him full powers to negotiate with the King of France, he had just been summoned to replace the Grand Pensionary, whose wounds kept him away from the Assembly of State, and had been commissioned to act for him in the States-General 'in the matter of the Triple Alliance, and in military and naval affairs.' The power thus given to him, and the consideration which Louis XIV. never ceased to manifest towards him in spite of the war entered upon between France and the republic, gave the Prince of Orange reason to fear that De Groot would sooner or later contrive to have the negotiations renewed when war was necessary to the new Stadtholder to confirm his power. De Groot had, it is true, protested against the merciless conditions which Louis XIV. wished to impose upon the States, but William III. nevertheless considered him as the principal representative of the peace party, and he was determined to deprive him of the power of hindering his design.

To destroy his credit William endeavoured to rouse suspicions against him. Summoned to the Assembly of the States-General to express his opinion as to the offers of peace made to the United Provinces by the Kings of France and England, he refused to give it unless certain members whom he pointed out were ordered to leave the hall. When the deputies of Holland retired to confer with the States of their province, he stated that 'the person who imposed silence upon him being no longer present, he could declare himself and advise the unqualified rejection of the proposals.' Expressly asked by the States of Holland to point out the deputy whom he suspected, the Prince of Orange, after some apparent hesitation, made up his mind to name De Groot. He stated that he felt it right to give his reasons, and reproached him with

having exceeded the limit of his powers in his negotiations with the King of France. He thus encouraged the accusations of his enemies, amongst whom was Fagel, the secretary of the States-General, who fearing to find in him a rival had stirred up against him in the Assembly of the States of Holland as his chief adversary, his nephew Michael ten Hove, recently appointed Pensionary of Haarlem.

Irreproachable as had been his conduct, which was moreover in conformity with the instructions of the States of Holland, De Groot, when he heard of Montbas' flight, realised at once the dangers which threatened himself. Although he had never compromised himself in his intercourse with his brother-in-law, he foresaw that this escape must inevitably expose him to political aspersions.

A report of his arrest was already spreading. 'M. de Groot has been arrested with his wife and children,' says a letter to Bernard, 'and they will be brought here as prisoners.' Fortunately De Groot, who, as he expresses it, 'had a particular dislike to murders and massacres, especially such as were attempted against his own person,' had placed himself out of reach of his enemies by retiring to the Spanish Netherlands. 'May God forgive those who are the cause of the step I have been forced to take for my own safety.' He ends his letter, which was addressed to the States of Holland, by assuring them that 'he would never violate the fidelity he owed them by acts which might harm the interests of his country, or injure his own reputation.' He thus guarded against any idea that he might follow the criminal example of Montbas, to whom he did not spare his condemnation. But the persecution from which he was flying did not leave him long in the enjoyment of that peace which he sought by a voluntary exile. Deeply afflicted by the death of his wife, 'whom he loved above all things, and whose love rendered him insensible to all other misfortunes,' and obliged to leave Antwerp, where his residence gave offence to the Prince of Orange, he sought a refuge at Cologne. Four years later, when he ventured to return to the Hague, William III. in his implacable hatred

instituted proceedings against him, but could not prevent his being honourably acquitted.

The prosecution of Montbas and the iniquities committed against De Groot coincided with the attacks which were directed with such hostility against John and Cornelius de Witt, both of whom had remained within reach of the blows of those enemies to whom they were about to fall victims. Prevented from continuing in the exercise of his office by the attempt to which he had nearly succumbed, and reduced to an inaction which did not disarm the hatred of his adversaries, the Grand Pensionary was living surrounded by his family at his residence on the Kneuterdijk, close to the palace of the States and the prison of the Court of Justice. His aged father and his sister Joanna de Zwyndrecht lived there with him as well as his other brother-in-law and his sister-in-law, the wife of Bicher van Swieten, who occupied another part of the house. His eldest daughter, Anna, was at home as well as his young sons when he entered his house covered with blood from the wounds which he had received in his struggle with the assassins. She assisted her aunts in their attendance on her father during his convalescence. As to the other daughters of the Grand Pensionary, he had, as if with a secret presentiment of his approaching end, desired that they might be brought back to him from Amsterdam, where they had been under the care of their mother's sisters. As soon as he began to recover he wrote to his brother-in-law, Peter de Graeff, to beg him to bring them back to the Hague, giving notice that he should send his carriage half-way to meet them. After a delay of a few days, to enable their uncle Bicker van Swieten to accompany them, they returned to their father's house to complete the family circle which he was not much longer to enjoy. Although John de Witt's career as a statesman seemed ended with the fall of that government of which he was First Minister, and which was swept away in the midst of public misfortunes to make way for that of the Prince of Orange, he could not escape the fate which threatened him. He awaited it with calm resignation. 'I would rather suffer injustice than commit it,' he replied to one of his friends, who

urged upon him the necessity of saving his life by revenging himself upon those who wished to ruin him. He showed neither emotion nor indignation at the passions aroused against him, and only said mournfully, pointing to his head, 'I carry the means of paying on my shoulders.' He was one of those men who sacrifice both popularity and life, hoping for no other return than the testimony of their own conscience and justice from history. His friends had advised him to escape from his persecutors by going away, and a rumour of his speedy departure had already spread. Five days after his attempted assassination they urged him to ask permission of the States to retire to some quiet spot where rest would assist in the healing of his wounds. The refuge offered to him was no doubt either near Amsterdam, in the residence belonging to his brother-in-law, De Graeff, at Ilpendam, or at Haarlem in the old country house of his uncle, Van Sypesteyn, where he had spent such happy days in his youth. But he did not listen to their advice. Too proud to let it be thought that he feared danger, he would have preferred that the States should take the initiative, and propose to him to give up his office, if only for a time. While dangers threatened him he considered that duty held him to his post. Jacob van den Bosch, who was afterwards Pensionary of Amsterdam and who knew of the warning given to the Grand Pensionary, had not the courage to speak of it; on the other hand, the friend who had recommended De Witt to go away could find no deputy who had either courage or influence enough to suggest to the States that they should request him to take steps for his own safety. It was necessary, therefore, to give up any hope of a leave of absence which would have enabled John de Witt to await at a distance from his enemies his restoration to health and the return of better days. The Grand Pensionary remained, therefore, in the breach until the day when he gave his enemies the prey they coveted, that of his corpse.

The most abominable accusations were made against this faithful and incorruptible servant of the State, pointing him out as a traitor. The correspondence between Luxembourg and Louvois, published about a century later, offers, it is true,

an apparent justification of these false charges, but upon examination it is easy to see that the honour and patriotism of John de Witt are unassailable. The plot to restore the government to the party opposing the Stadtholdership, in consideration of an agreement with the enemy, seems to have been, if not invented, at any rate wilfully exaggerated by Luxembourg, who was interested in its being believed. On July 24 Louvois wrote to him from the head-quarters before Bois-le-Duc: 'No better reply than yours could have been given to him who spoke to you on behalf of M. de Witt. Continue thus, and, without committing yourself in writing, let him understand that the King will willingly forget the past ill-conduct of his friend, and would not be sorry to see him once again in the saddle. You may add that any proposals made with a view to enabling him to set his affairs to rights will be readily listened to, provided that on his side he helps the King to an advantageous peace. If M. de Witt chooses upon this footing either to enter into the matter personally or to send some one who can be talked to openly, he will be very well received, and he may feel certain that no one will know of any negotiation he may enter into with the King.'

Three days later Luxembourg wrote to Louvois from Utrecht: 'I shall see one of M. de Witt's friends to-night, and shall offer him every possible service on behalf of M. de Witt, for which I have the King's authority. I think it cannot but have a good effect, but you will let me know the wishes of his Majesty concerning my conduct in this matter. I have given those who are well disposed towards us to understand that our support will restore them and cast down the Prince of Orange.' It was no doubt to gain to himself the credit of having persuaded them that he winds up his letter in these terms, with a doubtful tone which is not usual to him: 'They have half promised to help me to a victory, provided the conditions are regulated with M. de Witt, or even if they see that things are in a fair way towards that end.' Such testimony is certainly suspicious. In fact it mattered little to Luxembourg whether his information was true or not: he knew he could not better

pay his court to the all-powerful minister than by showing himself in the light of an assiduous newsmonger. 'Never tell me things by halves,' wrote Louvois to him, 'and however slight the foundation of any matter put before you may seem, always let me know of it. The King cannot be too well informed of what is going on, of whatever nature it may be.' Acting in conformity with these instructions, therefore, Luxembourg had little need to trouble himself as to the truth of his news, even if he risked giving credit to the false reports which he received. Thus in the very letter in which he tells Louvois of his secret interviews with a friend of John de Witt, he gives him the erroneous information that the Grand Pensionary had been arrested in his abode at the Hague.

A few days later, when William III. was thinking of nothing but increasing his army, he wrote to Louvois, without troubling himself about the truth, 'that he had just received notice that the Prince of Orange had disbanded 150 companies of cavalry and infantry.' We must not, therefore, trust to the sincerity of the communications by which Luxembourg tried to gain credit for himself. At any rate the offers of agreement which he received might be easily explained by the position in which magistrates, tradesmen, and all respectable people found themselves. In fact, according to the information of Stouppa, another of Louvois' correspondents, 'the latter sought in peace with France for a guarantee not only against popular seditions, but also against the dominion of the King of England, which would have allowed Charles II. to destroy the power of the republic by making himself master of its commerce. However that may have been, there is no mention in any of Luxembourg's letters of John de Witt having taken the slightest part personally in these secret negotiations; they rather show that he refused to do so, and thus contribute to complete his justification. 'M. de Witt's friend here,' writes Luxembourg, 'has as yet received no answer, because the person who went to the Hague was not sent to the Grand Pensionary, it was to a cousin of the said M. de Witt, who is away on a short journey, but is expected back any day.' 'The individual who went to seek M. de Witt has not yet returned,' he says in another

letter, and in the following one he makes a declaration which effectually removes all doubt: 'The truth is that M. de Witt has detained the messenger I was expecting.' Thus, on the Duke of Luxembourg's own statement, the conduct of the Grand Pensionary gives no opening for accusing him of any intelligence with the enemy; and admitting that proposals were made to him for the re-establishment of his authority, there is irresistible proof that he took no notice of them. From this point of view his conduct may be advantageously compared with that of the Prince of Orange, who had kept up a secret correspondence with his uncle Charles II. in which, to bring about a rupture of the alliance between the Kings of England and France, he stipulated on his own behalf for the sovereignty of the Seven Provinces. As to John de Witt, he never yielded to the temptation of a secret negotiation with Louis XIV. for the purpose of restoring the fortunes of the republican party, of which he was the head, and which had been deprived of the government.

Having done everything in his power to prevent or arrest the invasion, the Grand Pensionary lent himself to no projects of agreement with the invaders. He was too earnest in the execution of his duty to be rendered unfaithful by any wrongs of which he might have to complain. He was none the less accused of betraying his trust. No attack was spared him. His austere and irreproachable habits did not secure him against the calumnies which imputed to him criminal relations with the wife of one of the nobles of Holland, Catherine de Zuydland, who had married Wyngœrden, Lord of Werkendam, minister of the States in Denmark. His probity was no more respected than his patriotism. The simplicity of his life, the moderation of his tastes, the disinterestedness of which he had given such constant proof by contenting himself for long with so insufficient a salary, could not disarm the implacable resentment of party spirit. Although he had invested all his money in land or in the public funds, so as to make it inseparable from that of the State, he was nevertheless denounced as being guilty of misappropriation, and a report was spread that he had sent money purloined from the Treasury to Venice, that he might

take up his residence in that town after the conquest of the United Provinces. The numerous pamphlets which held him up to the hatred of his fellow-citizens were distributed openly under his very eyes. He had hitherto only met them with scorn. But in one of these libels, entitled 'Advice to all good and faithful subjects of the Netherlands,' he found the double accusation, that he had betrayed his country by leaving it without defence and had appropriated yearly a sum of 80,000 florins from the secret service money, so categorically stated that he thought himself obliged to break silence. The States had already taken the initiative by ordering the Court of Holland to commence judicial proceedings against the author of a pamphlet which they did not intend to leave unpunished. Two days later, at the request of the Grand Pensionary, they summoned their councillor deputies who had charge of the finance department of the Province, to examine his accounts and refute the injurious allegations of the pamphleteers. To silence them De Witt thought it well himself to present his justification to the States. 'Although I have always considered,' he writes to them, 'that such calumnies cannot be better put down than by scorning them and showing how little they affect one, still, as this time a formal accusation has been brought against me of having during my term of office misappropriated the money intended for secret correspondence, and of thus having robbed the State; having also heard it said on different sides that if this were not true its falseness would be made apparent; and not being, on account of my wounds, in a condition to appear in person before your High and Great Mightinesses, I have thought it well to send you such evidence as may prove the truth.' He began by pointing out that the funds from which he was accused of yearly misappropriating 80,000 florins never exceeded 24,000 florins, and that he had scarcely ever spent more than 6,000 florins. He proved, moreover, by the same evidence that although he had the direction of the secret correspondence he had never consented to receive the money intended to pay the expenses of that service, 'having always reflected on the suspicious temper of the people.' At the same time he made over to his

near relation Vivien, who represented him, a long memorial addressed to the members of the Assembly, in which the state of his fortune was clearly set out. In it he proudly defended himself, declaring that he had always considered the affairs of the State before his own.

He represented that he had never possessed land, money, shares, or credit—not so much as a halfpenny—outside the United Provinces; and, what was more, that all his property and capital, as well as that of his children, for whom he had purchased in the last loans a life annuity to the amount of 600 florins, was in the banks of Holland. 'My welfare,' he added, 'is thus closely linked with that of the State, and I am convinced that there is no one in the entire republic who has more thoroughly identified his good and evil fortune with that of the State than I have done, so much so that it is an established fact that I must fall and perish with Holland.' This testimony which he so eloquently rendered to himself touched the States of Holland. They hastened to ask the councillor deputies for the conclusion of their report, which the latter had not yet made known. Two days later the councillor deputies unanimously agreed that 'the Grand Pensionary had never received the secret service money,' and the next day the States solemnly registered this declaration.

But one voice only could make itself heard amidst the tumult of passion which had been aroused against John de Witt, that of the Prince of Orange. The Grand Pensionary therefore made up his mind to appeal to him, and to invoke his testimony as to the iniquity of the accusation against which he had to defend himself. The letter which he sent him has not been found. He had imparted it to Beverningh, who had remained at the camp with the Prince of Orange and whose intervention he requested. 'The odious calumnies which are daily vented against me in this province and elsewhere,' he writes to him, 'have obliged me to write at once to the Prince of Orange. I send you a copy of my letter, and I take it for granted that you will interest yourself in what may so cruelly compromise my reputation. Consequently I take the liberty of begging you to use your influence with

the Prince of Orange, that it may please his Highness to write, in conformity with my request to the States of Holland, to the president and councillors of the Court of Justice.'

Unable to believe that the Prince of Orange once in power would profit by it to satisfy his political dislikes, John de Witt hoped that the new Stadtholder would hasten to do him justice. He reckoned equally on his justice and his gratitude. But the solicitude he had testified for him when presiding over his education and giving him his first lessons in politics had only been repaid with unthankfulness. It was in vain that, since the appointment of the Prince of Orange as Captain-General, the Grand Pensionary had given him every assistance, as is shown in his correspondence, notably when he writes to him in these terms: 'I beg your Highness to let me know how matters stand with you, and what I can do here to provide the best means of assistance for your Highness and the States army, using all my energy and powers to succeed.' Vainly had he believed in the sincerity of the Prince of Orange's thanks when the latter replied to him the next day, begging him 'to hold out a helping hand to oblige one who was, and would always remain, his affectionate friend.' Deaf to the despairing voice of the great minister, whom he could not forgive for having so long withheld from him the inheritance of his ancestors, William III. kept him waiting ten days for his answer, the premeditated delay of which is mentioned by the envoy of the Elector of Brandenburg. He reckoned on thus forcing him to make the act of submission to which he wished to bring him. Van Beuningen, who was not indifferent to the misfortunes of his former friend, in spite of the change of opinions which had chilled their relations, had undertaken, according to a contemporary author, to arrange an agreement between the Grand Pensionary and the new Stadtholder. He represented to the Prince the great assistance which so able a minister could give him, by his experience in public affairs, in the midst of the dangers to which the republic was exposed. But De Witt did not think himself justified in making any agreement which would render him unfaithful to the cause he had always served. He quietly

but firmly evaded the advances made to him, though protesting against any suspicion either of hostility towards the Prince of Orange or of animosity to his person. William III. was, moreover, deterred from any fresh proceedings by his more intimate councillors, especially Fagel, who was anxious to succeed in sole charge to the office of Grand Pensionary, the vacancy of which he was expecting.

This attempt at an agreement was carried no further. Van Beuningen, whose intervention had become useless, was sent back to Brussels to carry on the diplomatic mission which he was conducting with the Governor of the Spanish Netherlands; and the Prince of Orange no longer hesitated to let the Grand Pensionary know that he refused him all protection. The tardy answer sent to him was cleverly calculated to prevent De Witt making use of it in his defence. 'Sir,' he writes to him, 'I have received your letter of the 12th inst. with the pasquinade which accompanied it. I should not have failed to answer it sooner had not the multiplicity of my occupations prevented it. I can assure you that I have always despised reports which are started in this manner, since not only my family, but I myself, have been several times attacked with a freedom and avidity beyond all bounds. As to the two points of which you made mention in yours, namely your handling of the secret service money and the little care you are reported to have taken in providing the army with all requirements, I can only say that as to the first I have no knowledge of it, and that the deputies of the States, as you very properly observe in yours, can better testify to this than anyone else. As to the second, I do not and cannot doubt that you took such care of the armies of the States both by land and sea as the conditions of affairs and of the times would allow, and in such a manner that they would have been capable of resisting the enemy. But you must be aware yourself that it would be impossible to specify all that may have been wanting, particularly to the land forces, and to verify either the trouble taken to supply deficiencies which were afterwards discovered, or that which might and ought to have been taken at the time, or to determine who was in fault, for

I am so taken up with business in these unhappy and troublesome times, that I have involved myself as little as possible in looking into the past. You will, therefore, find a much better justification in your past acts of prudence than in anything you can obtain from me. I trust with all my heart to have some other opportunity of proving myself your affectionate friend, William Henry, Prince of Orange.' With his habitual dissimulation William avoided any direct reproach to the Grand Pensionary, but he was careful at the same time not to exonerate him, and by leaving him open to suspicion, instead of coming to his assistance, he delivered him up without defence to his enemies.

Another victim was to be offered up to them as a sacrifice, Cornelius de Witt, against whom equally implacable resentment had been aroused. Since his return from the fleet he had lived in his house at Dordrecht, confined to his room and often to his bed by the rheumatism which he had suffered from since the naval campaign in which he had just taken so glorious a part. He had returned to find, surrounded by her five children, the brave companion of his life, Maria van Berkel, whose affectionate care was equal to her invincible strength of mind. The close and almost daily correspondence which he kept up with her shows the pains she took in the purchase of his outfit, for which his brother offers her an advance in the payment of the rents due to him and in the preparation of such medicaments as he might require. 'I found amongst my things,' he writes to her, 'a supply of balsam, and my servant tells me you have assured him that this remedy is very useful for stanching blood, but I do not know how to use it.' He was wrong to doubt her wifely forethought. In fact, a postscript mentions that the directions for the use of the medicament had not been forgotten, and he adds, 'Let us hope we shall not need it, nevertheless I thank you for your precautions.'

The thought of great duties to be fulfilled towards his country is the prevailing tone of all these letters, and softens the pain of separation. Knowing how thoroughly his wife shared in his brave confidence in the ardently desired victory, he had no fear of her ever giving way. He is certain of a

cordial reception of his suggestion when he recommends her to pray, confiding herself to God's mercy. For three weeks he kept her constantly informed of the manœuvres of the fleet, which were intended to hasten the encounter the enemy was trying to avoid. 'God be praised!' he writes to her, in a few lines from on board 'The Seven Provinces' man-of-war, after the fight in which he had faced death, 'I have come safe and sound out of yesterday's terrible battle, which lasted the whole day.' The next day he gives her a short account, with a list of the losses sustained by the English fleet; and setting himself aside as if he had been but a witness of the victory, he merely writes that 'the result has been most advantageous to the republic.' Maria van Berkel was in her turn to show herself worthy of her husband, doing honour to the lessons in heroism which she had received, during the cruel trials she had to go through.

Cornelius de Witt, like his brother, had everything to fear from the political reaction to which the change of government had just given rise. The Orange party could not forgive him for having resisted to the utmost the attempt made to force him to sign the act revoking the Perpetual Edict. The proofs he had just given in the States' fleet, of courage and devotion, could not save him from odious suspicions. Hatred and calumny had caused his services to be disregarded and had given rise to imaginary grievances against him. They even went so far as to accuse him of having hindered an attack on the French squadron, whilst continuing the fight against the English fleet. It mattered little that during the whole time that the battle of Solebay lasted, he remained intrepidly exposed to the enemy's fire on the deck of the flag-ship: he was accused of having hidden himself in the hold. He was, moreover, said to have misappropriated the naval stores, because, with Ruyter's authority, he had brought back from the fleet 3,000 lbs. of powder, refusing to allow it to be employed in the salutes which as a plenipotentiary of the States he ought to have received when he left the flag-ship, preferring to place this ammunition at the disposal of the magistrates of Dordrecht, that it might be used in the defence of the town.

His fellow-citizens, misled by the falsehoods which distorted all his actions, manifested hostility towards him from which he had much to fear. A fresh rising having taken place amongst the people of Dordrecht, who demanded a change of magistrates, his portrait, which had been preserved in the Town Hall as a trophy of victory, and which represented him leaning against a cannon during the glorious expedition to Chatham, was cut in pieces, the head being detached to be hung on a gibbet; and these acts of violence were accompanied by the most murderous suggestions. At the same time the peasants of Goeree, falsely persuaded that he had taken refuge in their island with a view to seeking refuge with the fleet and placing his life in safety, searched the country through to discover his retreat. They announced their intention of killing him; and his former clerk, on whom they laid hands, with difficulty escaped from their fury. A few days later, the arrest of Cornelius de Witt completed the work of vengeance which was being so relentlessly pursued against the two brothers, and it was the representatives of justice who placed themselves at the service of triumphant iniquity. On the afternoon of Sunday, July 24, whilst the municipal magistrates and most of the inhabitants of Dordrecht were at church, John Ruysch, the Procurator-Fiscal of the Court of Holland, went to Cornelius de Witt's house, accompanied by his archers. He came to arrest or rather to kidnap him. The burghers of Dordrecht, according to the municipal freedom which had been granted to them, were only amenable to the Town Council; nothing short of a surprise would therefore have sufficed to take away from the jurisdiction of his natural judges one of their magistrates, a former burgomaster of their town, and who had been deputed by the States of Holland to administer the district of Putten, in the neighbourhood of Dordrecht, with the title of ruard, or governor. Cornelius de Witt made no protest, and gave himself up to his persecutors. He sent to fetch his wife from church, where she had gone with her two sons, calmed their anxiety, and after having embraced his children, got into his carriage with the Procurator-Fiscal. A yacht was waiting in the river and

took him to the Hague. The next day, on his arrival, he asked in vain for a carriage to take him to the prison of the Court of Holland, La Castelnie, where he was to be closely guarded. He was obliged to go on foot, and the brother of the First Minister of the province, the former plenipotentiary of the States-General, who three months before had quitted the Hague escorted by a guard of honour, was brought back like a malefactor, escorted by the officers of justice, to the joy of the mob, always eager for the sight of great calamities.

As soon as he had been examined by the commissioners of the Court, he hastened to communicate with his wife, though he could give her little information. 'Dearest,' he writes to her, 'I arrived here yesterday morning at about seven o'clock with the persons who arrested me at Dordrecht. In the afternoon the judges examined me, but I am forbidden to tell you the cause of my arrest or any particulars concerning it. I think I may at least inform you that I told them that I had no doubt they would recognise my innocence, so you may make yourself easy and trust in Almighty God, Who, having protected me so long, will not forsake me in this just cause.' His wife had not waited for the receipt of his letter to write to him, and the day after he left Dordrecht she sent him the following lines, which softened the first hours of his captivity: 'Dearest, I hope you will have arrived tolerably comfortably, and that you will find matters in such a condition that you may soon return, and that Almighty God will have you in His keeping, your cause being just. I hope to receive a letter from you. Your very affectionate wife.'

His arrest, of which the reason remained unknown, led to the supposition that 'some very bad business was in question,' and gave credit to a rumour of a plot in which John de Witt was said to be implicated. 'It is said,' wrote some one, 'that the Ruard has been concerned in some treason against the Prince of Orange, whom his brother the Grand Pensionary wished to poison. Most important and secret documents, which the said Pensionary had already had conveyed out of his house, are being collected and seized. As to himself, he is being guarded in his house, and it is believed that to-night he

will, like the Ruard, be conveyed to a more secure place.' Indifferent to these reports, and preoccupied above all things as to the nature of the accusation brought against his brother, John de Witt spared no trouble to find it out. As soon as he discovered it, he hastened to give the information to the illustrious prisoner's wife, 'praying God to console and support her in this time of terror.' Upon the information of a barber surgeon, belonging to the village of Piershil, named Tichelaer, he was accused of an attempt to assassinate the Prince of Orange. Tichelaer had presented himself about a fortnight before, on Friday, July 8, at Cornelius de Witt's house. Being upon his request admitted into the Ruard's room, who was in bed, he told him he had come to him in his capacity of chief judge of the district of Putten, for compensation for an unjust charge of which he declared himself the victim, in a lawsuit brought against him by his maid-servant. Cornelius de Witt had promised his interest, adding that he would refuse him nothing if Tichelaer would consent to lend himself to an undertaking the secret of which he was disposed to confide to him. Receiving a favourable answer, he renewed the conversation in these terms: 'You must have heard that the Prince has been made Stadtholder, that the people forced me to consent, and that there will be no peace until they have made him sovereign, which would be the ruin of the State, as no doubt the Prince, marrying the daughter of some foreign sovereign, would get the republic entirely into his own hands.'

Tichelaer having then asked him what he wanted of him, he answered that if he thought him capable of mentioning this to any living soul he would have him killed immediately. Having then made up his mind to propose to him to commit the crime, he asked him to go to the Prince of Orange's camp, to assassinate the Stadtholder. After having arranged with him as to the safest means of putting this plan into execution, he had promised him the sum of 13,000 florins, and the office of bailiff of the district of Boyerlandt. Tichelaer could not persuade him to give any security in writing, but Cornelius de Witt with his hand upraised had sworn a solemn oath to pay him the recompense of the crime, and having only six

ducats about him, gave them to him as an earnest of his promise. In order to overcome his agitation he encouraged him, saying, 'You must succeed or perish; the State will never be properly governed during the Prince's life, he must therefore be put out of the world at whatever price.' He added the following words, on which he reckoned to give complete confidence to his accomplice. 'I know,' he said to him, 'of over thirty of the principal magistrates of the States who would willingly employ some one to take the Prince's life, but I have chosen you before all others because I believe you to be a man of resolution.'

A week after this interview, Tichelaer gave tardy information of it. Resolved, he said, to relieve himself of his burden of remorse, and to break the silence which he had sworn to Cornelius de Witt, he went to the Stadtholder's head-quarters. D'Albrantswært, the Prince of Orange's Master of the Household, and his uncle De Zuylesteyn received his first communications, and had desired him to go to the Prince, who had left for the Hague. He started at once, but could not find him. He was accompanied by D'Albrantswært, who took him to the judges. The latter had appointed two of their number, Nierop and Gool, to receive his deposition. It was upon their report that a warrant was secretly transmitted to the Procurator-Fiscal to bring Cornelius de Witt before the Court.

The infamy of the accuser, as well as the well-known integrity of the accused, should have sufficed to cause the denunciation to be looked upon as an impudent calumny. Three years previously, Tichelaer had been prosecuted in the Ruard's name, in his capacity as criminal judge, for an attempted rape upon a young girl name Jeanne Eeuwouts, whom he had endeavoured to seduce. The following year, before the Court of the district of Putten, he was convicted of perjury in an action brought by his maid-servant, Cornelia Pleunen, whose wages he refused to pay on account of some pretended accounts for medical attendance which he claimed from her and which the Court had refused to admit. Having been condemned in costs he grossly insulted his judges, who ordered him to pay a heavy fine, besides making him beg

pardon on his knees. He appealed in vain to Cornelius de Witt as chief judge of the district, and judgment having been confirmed, the Court ordered it to be put into execution.

In accusing Cornelius de Witt of a capital crime, Tichelaer appeared to have no other motive than that of revenge, and, if on that account alone, his depositions showed a onesidedness which was enough to make them suspected, even if not altogether rejected. The improbability of his account, in spite of the fresh details which he added, appeared indeed from his own declarations. Why had he waited so long to reveal a proposal which he said 'had horrified him'? Admitting that Cornelius de Witt could have advised such an attempt, would he have confided himself to this stranger as his accomplice? Did not Tichelaer confess that he had himself gone to him without being summoned? And could it be supposed that the Ruard had selected him without any forethought to carry out such a crime? It was with indignant pride that, from the moment of his first examination, Cornelius de Witt protested against such a denunciation, and, when confronted with Tichelaer, vehemently denied his accuser's story. According to him, the latter came with the intention of ruining him by laying a trap into which he vainly attempted to betray him. In fact, having contrived, by dint of urgency and after being sent away, once to obtain admittance to him at about eleven o'clock in the morning, and expressing a wish to see him in private, he had by this request as well as by his evil countenance aroused the suspicions of the Ruard's wife. The latter, who was on her guard since the recent attempt upon her husband, had placed her eldest son, Jacob, and his valet, Henry Smits, on guard at the door of his room.

Tichelaer, after beginning to talk in a roundabout manner, had offered to give Cornelius de Witt some information in regard to the unfortunate events of the time, which he could make known to him only. The Ruard, naturally distrusting him, answered, 'If it is anything good you have to tell me, I am ready to listen to you and to help you as far as in me lies; but if it is anything evil, keep silence, as I should certainly make it known to the magistrates or to the judges.' Tichelaer rose

and hastily retired, saying, 'Since you will not listen to me, I shall keep my secret.' The visit did not last more than a quarter of an hour. These precise details were confirmed by the depositions of the Ruard's servant, who had accompanied his master to the Hague, and by the evidence of the maids in the house. They are completed in a letter written to Joanna de Zwyndrecht by her daughter, who was married to Pompey Van Meerdervoort. 'Tichelaer,' she writes to her, 'lamented much to my uncle over the misfortunes of the times, and said that nothing would go well until his Highness was married, provided only he did not marry a foreigner. He began by saying that he knew one method of quickly pacifying the country, but my uncle De Witt would not listen to him any further, saying, "Go, I will have nothing to do with such rascality, it is no concern of mine. If his Highness marries, I have nothing to do with the matter. Leave the house, and do not speak to me of such villany, as for my part I should certainly make it known."'

Cornelius de Witt was not contented with merely sending away one whom he considered as an emissary bribed by his enemies. As soon as he had given an account of his interview to his wife, his sufferings preventing his writing, he desired her to write a letter in his name to the town secretary, Arendt Muys van Holy, to beg him to come to him immediately. Desirous of neglecting no precaution, he told him of the visit he had received, and asked him to let the burgomaster of the town know of it. He also gave notice to his nephew, Pompey van Meerdervoort, and to the town-sheriff, Gerard van der Dussen, so that failing the town-bailiff, who was ill, they might tell his substitute, Adrien Brillant. After having carefully collected all this information, John de Witt thought himself authorised to write 'that there was nothing to cause any alarm in the matter, unless from the malice of men.'

Strong in the integrity of his own conscience, Cornelius refused to challenge his judges, and made no use of the deed which his brother sent him the day after his arrest, to enable him to invoke the jurisdiction of his native town. The

deputies of Dordrecht, however, protested against this violation of their municipal privileges, and it was no doubt at the request of their pensionary Vivien, cousin of the two brothers, that they took the part of their illustrious fellow-citizen. They were anxious to clear him from a defamatory libel which accused him of misappropriating the powder belonging to the fleet, and not content with bearing witness to his patriotism they pointed out to the States of Holland the injustice of his arrest. They impugned both the competency and the procedure of the Court, demanding that their former burgomaster should be arraigned before the tribunal of his own town, or at any rate that they should shut up Tichelaer, who had remained at liberty under the pretence of finding witnesses.

The States took this proposal into consideration, but with cowardly weakness dared not ask for the release of the accused. They confined themselves to appointing a committee charged with making an immediate report to them on the conflict of jurisdiction complained of by the deputies of Dordrecht. Nevertheless, on a motion of the deputies of Hoorn and Enckhuyzen, in spite of the ill-will shown by the deputies of Haarlem, they required an explanation from the judges as to the consideration hitherto shown to the accuser contrary to the judicial customs of the times. They had already received a petition, presented by Jacob de Witt, the aged father of the accused, who demanded the imprisonment of Tichelaer to prevent his suborning witnesses against his son.

It was necessary that the judges should take a decided line with regard to the accused. Not daring to decide for themselves, they consulted the Prince of Orange. They wished that William should either allow them to do justice in the case by openly reproving the accuser, or, if he intended to dispose of the prisoner according to his own ideas, that he should appoint commissioners to take it out of their hands. But the Stadtholder, who was not disposed to be magnanimous, was at the same time too cunning to commit the slightest imprudence. Faithful to his policy of non-intervention, the Prince of Orange repeated the words which had been attributed to John de Witt, when he was asked to intercede for

his assassin, Jacob van der Graef, and declared 'that justice must run its course.' The comparison was as unjust as it was cruel and insulting; the observation was received as an order, and the Court declared itself competent and summoned Cornelius de Witt to submit himself. They, however, thought it necessary to arrest Tichelaer, and had him shut up in the House of Detention, called the 'Prison Gate' (*Gevangepoort*), but, on the other hand, maintained that instead of leaving the Ruard at the 'Conciergerie,' they ought to condemn him to the same captivity as his accuser. Cornelius de Witt was, therefore, transferred to one of the cells of this gloomy building—blackened with age, and pierced with narrow windows furnished with bars of iron—which still remains intact. He was there to experience the cruelty of his judges before he perished beneath the blows of popular frenzy. It was in vain that his family repeatedly attempted measures in his favour. John de Witt was much troubled as to the fate of a brother he dearly loved, and whom he considered as the victim of that hatred and animosity which he himself had encountered. He did all in his power to save him. His almost daily correspondence with his sister-in-law shows the pains he took in the defence of the accused. He earnestly entreats Maria van Berkel to send him all the depositions of the new witnesses, completing the attestations already received, and also the statement of Tichelaer's judicial antecedents, which he reckoned upon using to convict him before the Court as a rogue. 'I hope and believe,' he writes to her, 'that I shall soon see the falseness of the accusation made clear, so that your husband may be restored to liberty and honour, for which I pray the Almighty, to Whose protection I commend you.' Having thus collected all the evidence of his brother's defence, he applied to the foremost advocates at the Hague for their advice as to the course to be followed. After some consultation a voluminous judicial memorial was drawn up and sent by the wife and friends of the accused to the Court of Justice, in which, according to a contemporaneous work, no less than four hundred and four articles were set forth in his justification.

John de Witt busied himself also in exonerating his brother from other offences wickedly imputed to him. With this idea he wrote to Ruyter, knowing the weight of his testimony, and how confidently he could ask for it. In announcing Cornelius de Witt's arrest to the admiral, he told him of the calumnies which had not been spared to his brother even for his conduct while with the fleet, and against which Ruyter could, better than anyone else, defend him who had been, during the late naval campaign, his faithful companion in danger and in glory. With this view he sent him a draft of a letter of justification, and not wishing to seem to be asking him a favour, only requested him 'to make any alterations he thought proper, if he found the slightest thing in the declaration which was not strictly true. Ruyter, who was as high-minded as he was courageous, was not disposed to abandon in misfortune those whose friendship he had sought in happier times. He therefore hastened to reply to the Grand Pensionary's request by sending a message to the States of Holland, in which he rendered signal justice 'to the intrepidity of Cornelius de Witt, to the services which he owed to him, and to the truly brotherly union in which he had lived with him.' At the same time he sent a private letter to John de Witt, sympathising with him in his trials. 'If your brother,' he writes to him, 'is as innocent of all the rest that is imputed to him as he is in all that passed with the fleet, he has been terribly maligned.'

The hope of exonerating the accused became, however, daily weaker. Rightly believing that his brother was the victim of political revenge, John de Witt appealed to the only person who could shield him, and went publicly to visit the Prince of Orange. Forced to wait till his wounds were cured, the worst of which was not yet completely healed over, he had taken advantage of his first going out, on Sunday, July 31, to go to church and offer thanks to God for his recovery. The next day he hastened to see William, who had just arrived at the Hague. There is no evidence of this interview in any document of the time excepting the following letter to Bernard: 'Last Monday the Grand Pensionary made his bow to the

Prince of Orange, to whom he affirmed that he had never done anything either against his conscience or against his honour, but that seeing the people were not satisfied with his conduct he begged his Highness to allow him to resign his office. Upon which the Prince replied very shortly that it was for him to do as he thought best, and that, as to his resignation, he would do well to ask the States of Holland, his employers, the Prince himself having no difficulty in granting it to him.'

Rebuffed by this coldness, which left room for no doubts, and being invited to retire rather than in any degree detained, John de Witt saw that there was only one thing to be done: to send in his resignation, which for a month past he had been keeping in abeyance. Powerless to protect his brother against an unjust prosecution, he hoped to save him by disarming the resentment of the Stadtholder and renouncing his office, and hesitated no longer about giving it up. Moreover it did not cost him much. 'He saw,' writes Wicquefort, 'his plans undermined, the principles of his conduct destroyed, and so extraordinary a change of scene, that he now only played the ridiculous part of dummy where he had once been the principal performer.' He preferred yielding to necessity with a good grace, and not seeking in a useless prolongation of his tenure of office to survive the government of which he had been the head.

Still bearing visible traces of the sufferings his wounds had caused him, he only re-entered the Assembly of the States, after an absence of five weeks, to give in his formal resignation. Having informed his friends of his irrevocable determination, he took for the last time the chair from which he had so often risen to help by his words the interests of the republic. He made known his resolution in a remarkable speech afterwards published in a pamphlet, and which was an eloquent vindication of his long ministry.

'Noble and Great Lords,' he said, 'it was nineteen years ago, on the 30th of July last, that for the first time I took the oath in your Assembly in the capacity of Grand Pensionary of the Province of Holland. During these nineteen years the State

has been exposed to great wars and other calamities which, by the help of God and the wisdom of your Noble and Great Mightinesses, as well as by your courage and behaviour, were mostly happily terminated, and at last ceased. Your Noble and Great Mightinesses know with what zeal, with what pains and study, I have applied myself for several years to avoid the occasions for dissatisfaction and rupture in which we are now involved with the formidable enemy of this State. You cannot forget, my lords, how often I have taken the liberty of representing to you the misfortunes which might arise in the future if serious measures were not taken to apply betimes the necessary remedies to the evil with which we were threatened. But God, to Whose providence we must always respectfully submit, however incomprehensible it may appear, has chosen that matters should grow worse, and that we should become involved in this mischievous, ruinous, and fatal war, although the States in general, and the province of Holland in particular, have had ample time to prepare themselves and to provide all that was necessary for a vigorous defence.

'The registers of this Assembly and the recollections of its members give ample testimony to the constancy and urgency with which I have exhorted your Noble and Great Mightinesses, as well as those other provinces which are friendly and allied to us, to place themselves on their guard. Justice must be done. You have taken all imaginable care to avert the evil which was feared. You have done it also with all the promptitude and diligence possible in a body composed of so many members, and so constituted that it is usually more affected by the sight of sudden and pressing need than by exhortations founded on dangers which are only foreseen. In spite of all your care and attention in averting this evil, it has pleased God in His anger to bring down upon the States those misfortunes in which they are now involved, and that in a manner so difficult to understand—seeing the rapidity of the enemy's conquests and the faint resistance of those in command of our fortified towns—that posterity will find it hard to believe. What is most distressing at this unhappy conjuncture is, that these sudden disasters and misfortunes have produced in the

minds of the people and the inhabitants of this State not only a sentiment of general fear and dread, but a sinister feeling against their magistrates, especially against those who have had more to do than others with the management of affairs. Unjust, however, as these suspicions are, I at any rate am overwhelmed by them, though I cannot but think I might have been spared, since as a humble servant of the State I have only been able to obey implicitly the commands of my masters. But whether it is that I am thought not to have properly carried out the functions of my office, or that ignorant people imagine that I have appropriated what never passed through my hands, I am so furiously inveighed against, that I can in conscience come to no other conclusion than that my services must henceforth be prejudicial to the State, since it is very certain that it would suffice for me to have been employed in putting into writing the resolutions of your Noble and Great Mightinesses for these to be unacceptable to the people, who for that reason would not act upon them with the promptitude necessary for the use and benefit of the country. I have, therefore, thought it would be best to beg your Noble and Great Mightinesses, as I very humbly do, that it may please your goodness to relieve me of the exercise of the said office.'

Mindful, in his brother's interests still more than his own, of the situation in which he would be placed in returning to private life, he wound up by reminding the States that they had reserved to him, by a promise three times renewed, the office of judge in either of the two courts in which he might choose to sit, when he ceased to be their minister, and he claimed his right of admission into the High Court. The States of Holland, after having listened to his account and to the conclusions which he drew, gave him permission to withdraw whilst they deliberated on his request to be relieved of his office. The greater number of the members of the Assembly stated that they would have wished that the Grand Pensionary should continue to render good and faithful service, declaring 'that they only consented to part with him on account of the necessity of the times.' But the deputies of Amsterdam, Haarlem, Leyden, Gornichen, and Enckhuyzen, who wished to

ingratiate themselves with the Prince of Orange, contented themselves with a curt acceptance of John de Witt's resignation. The Assembly was, however, unanimous in recognising the engagements it had made, by granting him his appointment in the High Court, and the majority were disposed to make the same formal acknowledgment of their gratitude as when four or five years previously at the zenith of his power his tenure of office had been renewed. As an additional proof of confidence they requested him to prepare a report on the state of the finances, which would enable the States to ascertain what resources were at their disposal. It was a last appeal to his experience in public affairs, and to his solicitude for the welfare of the country.

By the next day reflection had rendered most of the members more cautious, and the deputies of Haarlem even went so far as to take part openly against the Grand Pensionary 'The town of Haarlem is not at all favourable to his resignation,' says a letter to Bernard, 'for the reason that if the States allow him to retire without any further investigation, they will be obliged to thank him for his service and good administration during the time he was in office, whereas it is of opinion that there should be some previous inquiry into many things that have taken place since he was made Pensionary. He is accused, in fact, of not having provided all that was necessary for the Prince of Orange's army, besides having misappropriated the secret service money.' Without taking note of a hostility so unjustifiable the States dared not set aside the opinion of the Prince of Orange, and Beverningh was commissioned to submit the resolution to him before it was definitively concluded.

The same day the Prince of Orange let them know that he thought it required much consideration, and that he desired to reflect upon it. The following day he declared with more or less good grace that he would not oppose it, but requested that the congratulations addressed to the Grand Pensionary in 1668 might not be renewed. The Assembly submitted humbly to his opinion, and confined themselves to the ordinary form of thanks. As to the States of Zealand, they

did not spare John de Witt a final outrage. The High Court being common to both provinces, they endeavoured to prevent his taking his seat, although according to the routine for judicial appointments the States of Holland alone had a right to dispose of it. They thus kept in abeyance to the very eve of his death his investiture in the office to which he was entitled by his retirement, and which would have been his one waif saved from the wreck.

The calmness of the Grand Pensionary's mind was little disturbed by these last strokes of adversity and injustice. He had too much dignity to complain of the Prince of Orange's ill-feeling towards him in dissuading the States from recording in their resolutions any public testimony of their gratitude. He avoided, even in his most intimate correspondence, any allusion to the ill-will from which he had suffered. 'Sir,' he writes in August to his brother-in-law—'on Thursday, the 4th of this month, I respectfully begged the States of Holland to release me from my office of Grand Pensionary and to allow me to sit as judge in the High Court. These two points were unanimously ceded to me by their Noble Mightinesses with a very courteous acknowledgment and the thanks of the whole Assembly. But as I learnt afterwards that it would be agreeable to the Prince of Orange to be consulted on the subject, especially in regard to the place of judge in the High Court, to which appointment he lays claim as Stadtholder of the Province, I asked M. the Pensionary Vivien to see that before the deliberation was renewed his Highness's opinion had been asked. After having taken a little time for reflection he stated yesterday that having heard and considered my request he agreed to it, and no further remarks having been made on the subject the said resolution was, upon the second reading, definitively concluded.' John de Witt expressed himself more openly in the letter, eloquent in its simplicity, which he wrote to Ruyter. It was free from bitterness, but he could not repress an accent of touching sadness. 'The people of Holland,' he wrote to him, 'have not only laid to my charge all the disasters which have befallen the republic, they have not even been satisfied to see me fall unarmed and defenceless

into the hands of four assassins; but when by the goodness of Divine Providence I escaped with my life and had recovered from my wounds, they were seized with a mortal hatred against those of their magistrates who they thought had had the greatest part in the direction of affairs, and especially against me, although I have been but a servant of the State. It was this which forced me to resign my office as Pensionary.'

Along, however, with these melancholy reflections on the ingratitude of his fellow-citizens, he could not help looking forward with pleasure to his well-earned repose. 'I find myself relieved of a very heavy and embarrassing charge, especially in these unfortunate times,' he wrote to one of his brothers-in-law in the letter informing them of his resignation, 'and I have reason to be most thankful to Almighty God.' He remembered how dear power had cost his predecessors: Olden Barneveldt had lost his head on the scaffold, a victim to the resistance he had made to the domination of the Stadtholder Maurice of Orange; Pauw only escaped by his retirement from the unjust accusations against which he could not have protected himself; Cats, overwhelmed by the weight of anxieties and difficulties in which he found himself involved, had fallen on his knees before the assembled States to thank God for relieving him of so heavy a burden. These examples recalled to De Witt the melancholy prediction which had been made when, at the time of his first appointment, one of his father's friends had advised him 'not to accept the office of Grand Pensionary unless he was indifferent as to whether he were put into his coffin whole or in pieces.' Once free of his office, he might hope that his resignation would serve to avert the implacable rigour of that fate which he was, nevertheless, not to escape. In giving up the power which, moreover, he only held in appearance, since the restoration of the Stadtholdership had placed the government in the hands of the Prince of Orange, De Witt had at any rate distinguished himself up to the last moment by his services to his country. He had placed the last obstacles in the way of further conquests, by the measures for defence which had arrested the enemy on the threshold of Holland. If his premature

retirement left him to regret not having accomplished the work of deliverance, he had at least the consolation of having done everything in his power to pave the way for success.

The question now was, how to replace him. Five days after his resignation the day was settled for the election of his successor, and the States of Holland determined to prepare instructions for a new Grand Pensionary, which before being adopted were submitted for the approval of the Prince of Orange. Several deputies advised that the functions of this office should be divided, one minister seeming now insufficient. They wished to give the administration of the finances to a Treasurer-General, to reserve the foreign correspondence for a Secretary of State, and leave to the Grand Pensionary the direction of the affairs of the Province. This proposal was not accepted, and John de Witt's office remained intact with the exception of the post of Keeper of the Seals and the administration of the fiefs of the Province, which were dissevered from it to be given to one of the deputies of the nobles, Duvenwoorde.

After having agreed upon the instructions for the new Pensionary of Holland, the States decided to reserve to themselves the nomination of three candidates, between whom the Prince of Orange would have to choose. This decision resulted in a ballot, and in spite of the previsions of the French agent Bernard in favour of Hop, the Pensionary of Amsterdam, the votes were divided between Fagel, the Secretary of the States-General; Beverningh, deputy of Gouda; Van Beuningen, Pensionary of Leyden; and Rudolph van Niedeck, former Pensionary of Rotterdam, and a judge of the High Court. Fagel obtained the majority of votes, twelve were given to Beverningh, and six to Van Niedeck. According to the terms of the resolution of the States, the Prince of Orange had to decide between the first three. He was not tempted to give the preference to Beverningh or to Van Beuningen, whose former friendship for John de Witt made him doubtful of them. He had, therefore, no hesitation in choosing Fagel, whom the States had placed first on their list, and whom he considered in a measure to be his own representative. The States of Holland definitively confirmed the Stadtholder's

choice, and Fagel entered upon his office on the day following that on which the great minister whom he succeeded was to pay with his life for the services rendered to his country.

John de Witt had now no refuge but death from the hatred of his enemies, and it was his brother who led him into the catastrophe to which both succumbed. Having been unable to obtain justice, Cornelius still awaited in prison the good pleasure of those upon whom his fate depended. Through the barred windows of his cell, he could see the neighbouring house of his brother on the Kneuterdijk, where his old father lived and in which he had shared the family greatness, now changed to cruel misfortunes. His thoughts must equally have turned to his peaceful home at Dordrecht, where he had left his wife surrounded by her sons and young daughters. According to a tradition which still remains, but which has no authority beyond that of a legend, two drawings by Cornelius de Witt's own hand on the panels of one of the rooms on the upper floor of the prison, where they may yet be seen, represent his house at Dordrecht and that of his brother—sweet though sad reminiscences of better times.

His imprisonment had in no way affected his tranquillity or calmness of mind. He had taken with him two volumes which have been preserved as precious relics of his last studies. One is in London, at the South Kensington Museum, an Elzevir edition of Horace, in which is to be found beneath his name and the date of August 20, 1672, an inscription in red ink, showing that he had had the book in his hand on the day of his death. The other was a volume of French plays, printed at Paris in 1671, and which included the following: 'La Femme Juge,' 'L'Imposteur, ou le Tartufe,' 'L'Avare,' and 'M. de Pourceaugnac,' by Molière; 'Les Intrigues amoureuses,' by Gilbert; and Racine's 'Britannicus.' This book, now in a private collection at Deventer, is thus inscribed: 'The Lord Beveren van Zwyndrecht, brother-in-law to Cornelius de Witt, having made him a present of this book, it was found after his murder in the room where he had been kept prisoner in the year 1672.

The prisoner, avoiding all complaints, continued to write to

his wife about his pecuniary affairs, especially desiring her to sell his latest crops, and testifying at the same time his great desire for news of herself as well as of the children's health. 'Dearest,' he begins his letter to her, 'although I have no doubt that the judges are perfectly satisfied of my innocence, I am, nevertheless, detained here to wait with resignation until they are pleased to wind up my affair. Pray be calm and wait with confidence for a happy ending. I remain, my dearly beloved, your humble servant and affectionate husband.' He ends his letters with these words, so expressive in their laconicism, 'in prison.'

After having alternately tried, first to prepare the most complete method of defence for him and then to obtain for him the protection of the Prince of Orange, not only by his appeals but by his resignation of the office of Grand Pensionary, John de Witt was forced to recognise the uselessness of his efforts. But he still continued to show an apparent confidence to his sister-in-law: 'Although in these intrigues we experience more and more the effects of the calamities of the times,' he writes, 'we think we have no reason to fear that innocence will be oppressed and overwhelmed, but rather to hope that by God's grace we may attain to a happy issue.' 'May the Almighty God,' he adds in the last letter of this private correspondence which has been preserved, 'give, to all that we may do in favour of my dear brother, a speedy termination in conformity with justice, that the honour of the family may be re-established. I therefore pray for his protection and consolation on your behalf.'

All these attempts in favour of the prisoner seemed to be checked by a determination to find him guilty. Cornelius de Witt began to be uneasy and to suspect the partiality of his judges, whom hitherto he had not mistrusted. With this idea he questioned the gaoler to know whether, having been a member of all the boards in the province, he could not appeal to his brother to obtain for him a hearing in the Assembly of the deputies of Holland. Being asked to give his reason for this request of an appeal to the jurisdiction of the States of his province, he said that he had acted with the idea of doing honour

to himself, adding that if he did not at once acknowledge the competency of the Court of Justice, it was to avoid authorising precedents which might affect the privileges of the town magistrates. This tardy demand did not prevent the examination from taking its course, although there could not be found in support of the prosecution 'either presumption, indication, or proofs,' as John de Witt writes to his sister-in-law. Had the judges only been independent, Cornelius de Witt must have been set at liberty immediately. But the fear of braving the popular hatred, or of displeasing the Prince of Orange, prepared them all to follow other inspirations than those of their own consciences. They had been reduced from nine to six members. Two of them, Fannins and Halewyn, were absent on the service of the State, Fannins being detained in North Holland, as commissioner of the Synod; and he would moreover, no doubt, have been obliged to excuse himself, being a cousin of Cornelius de Witt through his wife, Catherine van Sypesteyn. Halewyn, who from his character and influence over his colleagues might have forced them to do justice to the accused, had not returned from England, where he had been sent on an embassy. The third absentee was Graef, father of John de Witt's assassin. He had never returned to the Hague since his son had been condemned and executed. As to those judges who remained, Albert Nierop and Gool had shown their animosity against the Ruard from the very commencement of the examination, in the first interrogatories with which they had been charged. Goes' integrity was not to be depended on, and Van Lier and Cornelius Baan were impenetrable.

The president, Pauw, Lord of Bennebroeck, son of the former Grand Pensionary of the province, whose uncle Pauw, Lord of Ter Horst, presided for several years in the Grand Council, could alone be considered as favourable to the accused. He did not forget that he owed his position to John de Witt, who, to please the nobles of the province, had given him the preference over Paets, one of the principal members of the magistracy of Amsterdam, whose religious orthodoxy seemed doubtful. But his ignorance of the law, which deprived his opinion of all weight, prevented his directing

the debate, and his only anxiety was not to compromise himself. It was the same with the Procurator-Fiscal John Ruysch, nephew of the Pensionary of Delft, Van der Dussen, and cousin of the former Secretary of the States-General, Nicholas Ruysch, who had been one of the Grand Pensionary's most intimate friends; but his good-will was of no use to Cornelius de Witt, as from his incapacity and weakness of character he was not equal to the fulfilment of his functions. 'There is a proverb,' writes a contemporary, 'which says that a prisoner is always guilty, and it was Tacitus who said, "*Florentis domus amici afflictam deserunt.*"'

The councillors intentionally involved themselves in technicalities, and the deposition of Muys, the secretary of Dordrecht, gave them an opportunity of pointing out certain discrepancies in Cornelius de Witt's answers, which they eagerly pitched upon. Surprise and indignation had, no doubt, confused him in his first replies. He had begun by saying that he did not know Tichelaer and had merely related his visit as that of a stranger, whom he described, whilst Muys in his deposition spoke of Tichelaer as if the Ruard had already called his attention to him. Cornelius de Witt's silence, moreover, at his first examination, as to the hostility manifested by Tichelaer towards the Prince of Orange, when he had previously mentioned it in his statement to Muys, told against him. It is true he acknowledged that Tichelaer had begun by speaking of the danger which would ensue to the republic from the Prince of Orange's marriage with the daughter of a foreign prince, offering at the same time to divulge to him a means of pacifying the country. But he added that Tichelaer, whom he had at once silenced, had made no mention of a plot of assassination. The councillors were also desirous to know whether, either of his own accord or at the request of his wife, Cornelius de Witt had commissioned Muys to inform the burgomaster of the visit he had received, and whether also the bailiff's deputy had been informed by the wish of the accused, or whether the secretary had taken this upon himself. They were surprised, in any case, that Cornelius de Witt should have attached any importance to a conversation which,

according to his own account, must have seemed of no moment. Following the suggestions of his enemies, they seemed to impute the Ruard's promptness in denouncing Tichelaer's visit, to a wish to conceal the criminal proposals made to him, without reflecting that he would have been careful not to arouse any suspicions as to the project had he been its instigator and accomplice. Such were the improbabilities and obscurities which the councillors seemed to take delight in, thus enveloping the truth in thick clouds, as if they could not, or dared not, look upon it.

The original documents of the trial seem to show that they yielded to an even less excusable temptation, that of bringing Cornelius de Witt to account as legally answerable for his political opinions, although he was not responsible to the councillors for them. Muys and Hoogewerf, the captain of the burghers of Dordrecht, on being questioned, gave evidence as to the violent scene in which the Ruard, after some useless resistance, had been forced to sign the revocation of the Perpetual Edict. Cornelius de Witt, by his open and unreserved confirmation at three different examinations of the account given by these two witnesses, placed in the hands of his judges a weapon against himself, by reminding them that they had before them one of the most faithful and determined representatives of the republican party. With his usual courageous decision he stated that, after having in his capacity as magistrate of Dordrecht voted for the Perpetual Edict as contributing to the preservation of the liberty of the country, he could not sign the Act which revoked it. He added that having sworn to observe it he could boast that he had not chosen to break his oath until he was relieved of it. He nevertheless protested against the feeling of animosity imputed to him in regard to the Prince of Orange. Not allowing himself to be embarrassed by the captious questions which were put to him, he declared loyally but simply that he had never taken into consideration what might happen in the event of his Highness' death, but that in the present situation of affairs he thought that such a death would place the republic in the greatest confusion. Anxious to gain the good graces of the

new chief of the State, the councillors tried to obtain from the accused an expression of repentance for his conduct, by asking him what had been the result of the Perpetual Edict. He answered that he had nothing to say to them about it, not wishing to give them a reply which might be taken as a disavowal. Such complaints could not without open scandal be brought against the accused, so that, to connect with the accusation statements which seemed absolutely alien to it, the judges had to be equally supple and inventive. They considered themselves at liberty to make use of the evidence either to convict the accused of a desire for vengeance, or to bring up against him fresh discrepancies. They thus managed to attach a criminal meaning to the following words, which Muys and Hoogewerf declared they had heard him utter when he was urged to sign the revocation of the Perpetual Edict: 'Rather run me through with your sword; or if you will not do that, call some of the ruffians and vagabonds from outside, and they will undertake it.' These words were taken up as a provocation addressed to the partisans of the Prince of Orange. Cornelius de Witt's denial, and declaration that he had uttered no words but these, 'I would rather be stabbed in my bed than stoned in the streets by the mob,' was considered as a mere excuse.

The depositions, moreover, which he acknowledged to be correct, and in which Muys and Hoogewerf recalled to mind the force which had been put upon him, were compared with Tichelaer's denunciation. The latter used the same terms in repeating the account which he stated had been given to him by Cornelius de Witt of this scene, whereas the accused asserted that he had never mentioned it to him. Instead of recognising that public report would have sufficed to furnish Tichelaer with the information he had given, the judges preferred to believe that Cornelius alone could have communicated it to him. They were therefore obstinate in their conclusion that his interview with Tichelaer had been of a confidential character and of a nature to give credit to the charges brought against him. It was in vain that Cornelius de Witt, confronted with his accuser, had twice forced him to

retract in answer to questions which had been put to him. A second examination, in which he asked to be again confronted with him, was refused. Tichelaer was thus able to confirm his own declarations and to contradict those of the Ruard at his leisure, without any fear of the latter's forcing him to contradict himself. Hoping to oblige the accused to confess his guilt, the judges did not shrink from putting him to the torture.

The report of their resolution, which has been fortunately preserved in the manuscript reports of the trial, allows of each one receiving his share of honour or ignominy according to his deserts. Albert Nierop, the oldest of the councillors, was the first to propose putting Cornelius de Witt to the torture. William Goes followed him. Frederick van Lier only expressed a wish to hear again those witnesses who had contradicted the accuser on certain points, and promised to agree to the torture if the discrepancies still continued. Matthew Gool had not even such feeble scruples, but voted without hesitation or reservation like the first two. Cornelius Baan alone protested with unshaken firmness against the cruel abuse of which his colleagues wished to make the accused a victim. He warmly urged that Tichelaer could not be considered as a witness, and ought to be treated as an informer. He pointed to the proofs of his infamy and the presumption of partiality and calumny in his evidence, which should force upon the Court the duty of challenging it. He was indignant at the consideration which had been shown to him, and did not shrink from crying shame upon his colleagues, declaring that if they thought it necessary to apply torture, Tichelaer ought to be the first to be submitted to it. The president, Adrien Pauw, voted last. Honest, but weak and wanting in authority, he sided with Baan, but contented himself with observing that he saw no sufficient reason for acting harshly towards the accused, and timidly suggested a postponement until the next day 'for maturer consideration.' The judges being equally divided, proceeded to put the matter to the vote. Van Lier, who had been hitherto undecided, now no doubt made up his mind to go to extremes, and according to the short notice in

the report, torture was voted by a majority of one. Tichelaer was spared, in spite of the application of the Procurator-Fiscal Ruysch, and having nothing to fear for himself, he waited with misplaced confidence for the torture to draw from its victim the confession of an imaginary crime.

Still, remorse for the cruel treatment to which they were going to subject an innocent man seemed to weigh upon the judges' consciences. They appeared to hesitate before subjecting him to it. To satisfy Van Lier, they again examined Muys and Hoogewerf, and confronted them with the Ruard. Cornelius de Witt and Muys could not make their recollections agree. The former declared that he had charged Muys to inform the burgomaster of Dordrecht and the deputy bailiff of the interview he had had with Tichelaer, whilst Muys stated that he had done so of his own accord. But this contradiction was of no importance, since Cornelius de Witt, far from attempting to suppress the fact of the visit, had hastened to send for Muys to tell him of it. Besides, Muys and Hoogewerf differed from the accused as to the words they attributed to him when he was forced to sign the revocation of the Perpetual Edict, although these words, which were after all very much the same, had nothing whatever to do with the action brought against him. This last evidence, slight as it appeared, was nevertheless considered as a proof of guilt.

In vain was fresh evidence produced in favour of Cornelius de Witt by a second affidavit of the maid-servants of his house testifying that the account of the interview between Tichelaer and the Ruard, which they had repeated and which agreed with that of the accused, had been given to them by Cornelius de Witt's servant, who had remained at the door of his room, and before the latter had gone in to his master or could have concerted with him. In vain did John de Witt, in fear and anguish only too well justified by the threatening attitude of the judges, prepare in all haste a second petition signed by his father. It was presented to the Court by Jacob de Witt in the name of his son's wife and friends, who had added a memorial in which the strongest arguments were

brought forward against further prosecution and the application of torture. The judges refused to retract, and Cornelius Baan and the president, Pauw, being unable to oppose the decision of the other four, the executioner was summoned.

They were as much influenced probably by fear as by revenge, and of all passions fear is the most merciless. Already the popular hatred, roused to frenzy by the false report of a threatened attack upon the Prince of Orange, was clamouring for a victim. The women assembled before the door of Nierop, who had shown particular animosity against the accused, and demanded with fury the execution of Cornelius de Witt. 'The Court is bound to do justice,' says a letter to Bernard, 'and it is thought that the Ruard will be condemned to death.' His escape having been announced by the night-watchman, the false report, which he seemed to have been secretly commissioned to spread, roused the mob to action. They rushed to the prison, which they kept in a state of siege for the rest of the night and the following day, threatening to pillage the neighbouring houses, in which they were persuaded the prisoner had sought refuge. Warned of the tumult, some of the judges went in the early morning to the prison, and on their return publicly announced that they had found the accused in his room. But the ringleaders refused to trust them, and Cornelius de Witt was obliged to show himself at the bars of his window to prove his presence. Nevertheless, it was necessary for the dispersal of the mob that the burgher company of the district should furnish a guard for the prison, or the rioters would soon have got possession of it.

These threatening manifestations took away the remaining scruples which had caused the judges to delay the torture of the accused. On the evening of August 18 the gaoler came to tell him that he had received orders not to give him his usual meal, without assigning any reason for this interdiction, which was intended, according to custom, to weaken the accused when he was given over to the executioner. Cornelius de Witt guessed what was awaiting him. 'Am I to be tortured?' he asked his gaoler. Receiving no answer, he showed neither

fear nor weakness. He was ready to brave suffering with the same courage that he had shown in braving death when he was with the fleet. He belonged to that race of martyrs who were equally armed against political and religious persecution, and whom suffering could not overcome.

The next morning he was conducted to the chamber of torture, a low and gloomy cell into which the light of day could scarcely penetrate, and which seems to have retained ineffaceable traces of the torments of which its narrow limits had so often been the theatre. The executioner, John Corstyaenzy, from Haarlem, was ready for his patient. He had just succeeded his father, who had been obliged to resign his employment because he had failed to cut off at one blow the head of Jacob van der Graef, John de Witt's assassin. It was his first experience in his cruel office, and he seemed to find a ferocious pleasure in it, having said the week before that 'if once he were placed behind the Ruard he would treat him without pity.' Nevertheless, when he found himself in the presence of his victim, who maintained the proud bearing of innocence, and saw a brave and illustrious servant of the country at his mercy, he could not hide his confusion, and 'begged his pardon for what he was about to do.' He requested him to take off some of his clothes, and Cornelius de Witt making no resistance, the torture was commenced.

His position as burgher and former burgomaster of Dordrecht prevented his being subjected to the usual first ordeal of accused persons, that of the whip, but the executioner had received orders to spare him no other severity. Having stretched him on the rack without waiting, in spite of his remonstrances, for the arrival of the judges, he fastened the sufferer's legs between two planks, furnished with a plate of lead, and a vice which could be screwed until the bones were broken. Startled by the pain, Cornelius de Witt could not contain himself: 'You rascal,' he cried to the executioner, 'if you dare to treat me like this I shall strike you.' 'What, complaining already?' replied the executioner; 'you have a good deal more to bear yet. Come, confess, for you will never be able

to resist the pain.' This taunt restored the Ruard's firmness. He hardened himself against the suffering, and only replied, 'How can I confess what I did not do?' Having bound the accused with his arms behind him, the executioner now attached a fifty-pound weight to his toes, and then lifted him up by means of a pulley to the ceiling. Swinging abruptly from side to side, with the toes nearly torn from his feet by the weight they were supporting, while the chafing of the pulley was bruising his arms—already extremely sensitive from rheumatism—Cornelius was in the agonies of torture when the councillors of the Court of Justice, accompanied by the Procurator-Fiscal Ruysch, suddenly entered, exclaiming, 'Confess! confess!'

He had before him those from whom he had more than once received tokens of deference, and who had now come to look on at his sufferings. He eloquently protested his innocence. 'You may tear my body in pieces,' he cried in a firm voice, 'but where there is nothing, you can find nothing.' Indignant at their persistence in urging him to confess his guilt, he appealed to them in return, 'You know well that I am innocent. I call God to witness, Who will be my judge and yours. It is before Him that I summon you to meet me.' The judges thus provoked were implacable and protracted his agony. They had him, however, lowered from the pulley and bound again to the rack. Knotted cords lacerated his body in three places, and whilst his limbs were being forcibly extended his head was fixed between four iron bars. Far from being overcome by such suffering, Cornelius de Witt found in it an indomitable strength which gave him a glorious victory over his judges. He proudly declared 'that had he been capable of conceiving a plan of assassination, he would have trusted to no arm but his own to execute it, and would not have had recourse to the services of a wretch such as his accuser.'

To encourage himself heroically to defy their cruelty he began, according to the generally received account, to recite with spirit the lines of Horace, which he had probably just been reading in the volume that had soothed his hours of captivity, and which he might well apply to himself:

Justum ac tenacem propositi virum
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solida.

According to other writers, it was during his captivity that Cornelius de Witt took pleasure in this quotation, and the testimony of the executioner, which can scarcely be rejected, is that before his judges his words were less grandiloquent but more in harmony with his religious sentiments. His Christian faith had strengthened him against suffering by giving his soul the dominion over his body, and he thanked God in these terms, which bear the stamp of authenticity, 'Oh, my God, I proclaim Thee a great God, for I feel no further pain.' Those who had been witnesses of his invincible courage had nothing to do but to acknowledge themselves beaten. They retired, leaving the noble patient shattered by the torture which had lasted, an hour and a half according to some accounts, three hours according to others. They had nothing but the shame and humiliation of useless torture. It was in vain that one of the judges commanded the executioner to keep it secret, desiring him to let it be believed that it had been a mere formality. The executioner himself felt some remorse for this deception, and on his death-bed, a few months later, having then no hope of earthly recompense, his conscience forced him to ask forgiveness of Cornelius de Witt's widow. The letter, in which he gives her an account of her husband's agony, and which has been preserved in the family records, proves that he did not spare him. He protested that not for all the goods in the world would he again torture anyone as he had tortured him. 'I tremble when I think of it,' he added; 'and may God have mercy on me!' This declaration, whose authenticity is undoubted, is confirmed by the registers of the Court of Justice. In spite of the pains taken to get rid of all the documents of the trial, the order for the payment of the executioner's expenses has been discovered. This is what we find under the date of August 19, 1672: 'To using the pulley, 3 florins. To stretching on rack, 3 florins. For the journey, 8 florins. To two days' lodging, 6 florins. Total, 20 florins.'

This bill suffices without any other evidence. It forms in a few words a certificate of indelible opprobrium to the judges.

Their work of iniquity was shamefully consummated. The refusal of the accused to confess, in spite of his being put to the torture, made it impossible for them to condemn him to death for the crime imputed to him. No evidence but that of the accuser having been produced, it seemed that they could not now fail to admit his innocence. But the judges had not the courage even at this late hour to do their duty. Instead of at last doing him that justice which was due to him, they dared not refuse a final satisfaction to his enemies. Whilst they were deliberating, the secretary, Adrien Pots, represented to them that two former judgments of the Court might serve them as precedents for a condemnation without any necessity for assigning a reason. It was no doubt by a majority only that they decided on following this advice, which released them from a dilemma. They took advantage of it to pronounce judgment without any allusion to the accusation brought against Cornelius de Witt, declaring him to be deprived of his office and dignities, banishing him for ever from the province of Holland, and condemning him to pay the expenses of the trial, which were assessed afterwards at 983 florins. The next day, Saturday, August 20, at half-past eight o'clock in the morning, the judges sent word to the Ruard that they were coming to make his sentence known to him. In vain did Cornelius de Witt demand that it should be read at the bar of the Court. Under pretence of preventing further riots amongst the people, they went to the prison to inform him of his condemnation. It was thus expressed: 'The Court of Holland having seen and examined the papers and documents delivered over to them by the Procurator-Fiscal of the said Court for the prosecution of Master Cornelius de Witt, formerly burgomaster of Dordrecht and ruard of the district of Putten, now detained in the prison of the said Court; and also his examination and confronting with the witnesses, as well as all that has been put forward on the part of the said prisoner; and having examined into all that could bear upon this matter, declare the said prisoner to be deprived of all his offices and dignities, and

banished from the Province of Holland and West Friesland, never to return under pain of more severe punishment; and condemn him in the costs and expenses of justice, according to the assessment made by the said Court. Determined and concluded by MM. Adrien Pauw (Lord of Bennebroeck, president), Albert Nierop, William Goes, Frederick van Lier, Cornelius Baan, Matthew Gool, Judges of the Court of Holland and West Friesland, and given at the gate of the said prison of the said Court. August 20, 1672. Adrien Pots, present.'

Cornelius de Witt strongly protested against this sentence, and demanded to know the grounds of it. 'All the world,' he said, 'should know what I have done.' The councillors persisted in their refusal, and replied that the Court was not called upon to give any reason. Unable to contain his indignation, he exclaimed as they were going, and almost in their presence, 'What judges!' It was not a judicial but a political verdict which they had pronounced, as if in conformity with orders received, as one of them, Van Lier, afterwards gave it to be understood, 'apologising for being able to say no more.' At any rate, in condemning an innocent man out of servile obedience to the passions and hatred of the mob, they encouraged instead of trying to appease them; and their iniquitous sentence was thus the prelude to the sanguinary drama in which the two brothers fell victims to the same death.

The sentence of banishment had just been made known to Cornelius de Witt, when the gaoler's maid-servant arrived at John de Witt's house to request him to go to his brother. Contrary to the received idea that the Grand Pensionary's summons to the prison was a trap by means of a false message, it was the Ruard himself who had sent for him. He wished to consult him as to his conduct, whether he should submit to the judgment of the Court or appeal to the Grand Council. 'Go to my brother, and ask him in my name to come to me,' he said to the gaoler, Van Bossi, who had gone up to his room after the reading of the sentence to congratulate him on being set at liberty. Such was the account given six months later by the gaoler himself and Roland Kinschot, one of the members of the Grand Council. It is confirmed, at least indirectly, by

the testimony of John de Witt's servant, Van der Wissel, who gave evidence at the inquiry held after the assassination of the two brothers, and who was present at their interview when they met in the prison. The deposition, in which he gave an account of the words he had faithfully recorded, makes no allusion to the surprise they could not have failed to show had Cornelius not expected his brother's visit.

The Grand Pensionary was in the hands of his barber when his sister, Joanna de Zwyndrecht, came to tell him of the arrival of the gaoler's maid, and to announce the request with which the latter was charged. Eager to respond to his brother's appeal, he did not hesitate to go to him, in spite of the entreaties of his eldest daughter, Anna, and the tears of his other children, terrified at the perils to which their father might be exposed. Accustomed to brave rather than fear danger, he calmed their anxiety, and at about nine o'clock in the morning left the house to which he was never to return. He had but a few steps to take to reach the prison. His father, now eighty years of age, was very nearly going with him. Jacob de Witt was reading in the garden of the house, which he occupied with his son, and which extended behind the Kneuterdijk along Duke Street, when John de Witt left it without giving him notice, so as to spare him fresh anxiety. He lamented this more than once during the fatal day, declaring that he could not console himself for being separated from his sons, whose fate he wished to share.

As a measure of precaution, and also perhaps with an idea of providing the necessary formalities for his brother's release, John de Witt had taken with him his two clerks, Bacherus and Ounewaller, as well as his faithful servant, Van der Wissel. He had, moreover, given orders to his coachman to come and fetch him. Presuming that his brother after being tortured would not be able to walk from the prison, he intended to take him in his carriage to his country house near the Hague, where the exile could in safety receive the farewells of his family. Having arrived at the prison without seeing any sign of disturbance to make him uneasy, he found two sentinels of the burgher

company, who had been on guard since the day on which the false report of Cornelius de Witt's escape had roused the mob. The door having been opened to him, he at once made for the room pointed out to him, ascended the winding staircase leading up to it, and stopped at the end of a corridor where he crossed the threshold of the cell. What a meeting, and in what a place!

Four months previously the two brothers had parted at the summit of honour. They met again in a prison: one bruised and bleeding from the hands of the executioner and under the weight of an unjust condemnation, the other still bearing the scars resulting from the attack in which he so nearly lost his life, and forced, as if in expiation for public misfortunes, to resign those powers as Grand Pensionary which he had only used for the good of his country.

They were both accustomed to a certain dignity of manner, and, having made no request to be left alone, they seemed to be on their guard against all expression of feeling. According to the evidence of the gaoler and of John de Witt's servant, who, as well as the two clerks, were witnesses to their interview, John said to Cornelius, 'How are you, brother? I have never seen you since your return from the fleet.' Cornelius replied, 'And I have not seen you since your wounds and your illness.' Being questioned by the Grand Pensionary as to the end and motives of the sentence recorded against him, he pointed out that by a flagrant breach of the law it made no accusation against him and only pronounced the decree of banishment. Then adverting to other irregularities in the proceedings, and having in a few words told of his sufferings and again protested his innocence, he announced to his brother his intention of appealing to the Grand Council. The latter vainly endeavoured to dissuade him from it. Any delay in his brother's release seemed perilous, and was not compensated for by any hope of his obtaining that justice which political passions refused him. He represented to him, moreover, that no appeal would be valid, as in criminal cases the decision of the Court was final. But Cornelius was determined. The flaws in the form for the instructions for his trial and in the

judgment pronounced, seemed to him to allow of a right of appeal. The recent appointment of his brother as a member of the Grand Council gave him confidence, no doubt, in the jurisdiction which he thought he had a right to invoke.

John de Witt wished to see the sentence before he came to any determination, and he sent his chief clerk, Bacherus, to ask for it at the record office. He found some threatening groups assembled before the prison, and had scarcely started—'trembling with fright, and with a face like death,' according to an eyewitness—when he was pursued with cries of 'Where is the rascal? He must not escape us either.' Bacherus, retaining his presence of mind, instead of hastening on mingled with the crowd, and those who were in pursuit passed on without recognising him. Not seeing him return, the Grand Pensionary began to get uneasy. His second clerk, Ounewaller, had just informed him that his carriage had been sent away by the ringleaders, who were gathering round the prison to oppose the release of Cornelius de Witt, exclaiming that the traitor was being taken from them to be carried home in triumph. Already reproaching himself for having so rashly summoned the Grand Pensionary, the Ruard feared that he had brought about the ruin of him who had been so dear to him during his life, and might still be the support of his family after his death. He urged him to go, promising to trust to the advice he might give him when he had studied the sentence of the Court at his leisure.

Yielding to his entreaties, the Grand Pensionary consented to take his departure, having been about an hour with his brother, whereas he would not have been likely so to prolong the interview had his summons to the prison been a trap. He descended to the vestibule, and at half-past ten the door was opened to him, in company with his clerk and his servant. As he was crossing the threshold he was stopped by the sentinels, who crossed their muskets before him. 'No one can go out,' said one of them, roughly pushing him back. 'Why not?' asked John de Witt; 'you know very well who I am.' Some others amongst those on guard ran up saying, 'You cannot leave without an order.' 'Whose order do you require?' he

asked. 'That of our officer,' they replied. The cry of 'Fire! fire!' then rose from the crowd. One of the burghers discharged his musket, but it missed fire. Without a thought of the danger, John de Witt would perhaps have attempted to force a passage if the terrified gaoler had not driven him back into the prison, the door of which he quickly shut.

The Grand Pensionary had been so violently pushed back that he fell. When he got up the gaoler observed that his countenance was agitated, as if a vision of his approaching death had appeared to him in all its horror. Quickly composing himself, he asked to be conducted back to his brother. A last ray of hope deluded him when the lieutenant on guard, a bookseller named Gerard Asselyn, accompanied by the burgher, Van Os, who had stopped him at the door of the prison and seemed to regret not having allowed him to go out, came to him and promised to use his influence with the captain of the guard to have him set at liberty. But he did not return, being detained by the other burghers on guard. Not yet losing all confidence, John de Witt questioned the gaoler as to whether there was any other exit from the prison. He received a reply in the negative, and gave vent several times to the words, 'I wish I were out of this; how shall I get out?' He was a prisoner in his turn, and had but to resign himself to the fate which awaited him, consoling himself at any rate with the thought of sharing it with his brother.

The fury of the mob only waited a signal to be let loose. Dark threats had been publicly made the preceding evening and murderous placards had been posted up. At half-past seven in the morning the following lines were to be read on the door of the New Church: 'Lucifer calls from Hell, "Cornelius de Witt must come at once; but his head must be cut off first. His brother also is a villain, he must be made to come with him." Lucifer calls from Hell, "When are the De Witts coming?" The burghers call from the Hague, "Expect them to-night."' Tichelaer, on his side, detained in prison until Cornelius de Witt's sentence had been made known to him, had had time to confer with the Ruard's declared enemy, the Councillor Nierop. In an interview, overheard by Ruysch's

clerk, which he afterwards gave an account of, Nierop informed Tichelaer of the judgment which was about to be pronounced, expressing his regret that he had not been able to obtain a severer punishment than exile. 'It is with you,' he said, in a low voice, 'that it now remains to stir up the people, by making them believe that a culprit has been spared and his accomplices shielded from justice.' He exhorted him to pave the way for a riot, and cause one of the brothers to be massacred in prison before he got out, and the other at his residence, where it was supposed he would remain. Eager to carry out these iniquitous instructions, Tichelaer uttered such threats that the terrified gaoler appealed, though in vain, to the judges, begging them not to release him until Cornelius de Witt should have been set at liberty and safe from his vengeance.

They reassured him by declaring that they would see to the maintenance of order. To prevent the release of the prisoner until he could make certain of his victim, Tichelaer, as soon as the prison door was opened to him, gave his name to the burgher who was on guard, and announced that Cornelius de Witt was going to follow him. 'Gentlemen,' he said to them, 'the Ruard has escaped you. He is banished from Holland, and there is an end of it.' They cried out, 'That shall not be, or there will be the devil to pay. We will shoot him first.' Having thus given a first hint, Tichelaer stopped the passers-by whom he met in the inner court of the palace—the Binnenhof—and informed them that Cornelius de Witt's life had been spared, and that his torture had been a mere formality. He added that the judges had acknowledged his guilt, since he, the accuser, had received no punishment; and denounced as a scandal the judgment which he said was equivalent to an acquittal. He thus encouraged those who were collecting around him to take the law into their own hands. These suggestions circulating from group to group were keeping up the irritation of the people, when Tichelaer was suddenly informed, by some one who came up to him, that John de Witt had gone to visit his brother in the prison. Seeing at once how easily he could fell both victims with one blow, he hastened the accomplishment of the crime he had undertaken

to carry out. He left the public-house, where he was seated with some other ruffians like himself—amongst others a man named Van der Mossel—'whom he publicly embraced with much show of friendship'—and went to the window of the prison gateway to harangue the crowd in these terms, which are certified to by the accounts of the day: 'This dog is about to go out with his brother, who is with him; keep him in. The time has come: revenge yourselves on the rascals!' 'Murder! Treason! We will have them both!' howled those who heard him, whilst the burghers responded to their shouts by cries of 'To arms!' It was the signal for a race, 'in which the women joined armed with sticks and staves,' and all the approaches to the prison were soon surrounded by crowds whose sinister outcries could be heard by the two brothers.

Nothing but the employment of public force legally set in action could now save them, and this lay in the hands of the councillor deputies, the executive power having been made over to them by the States of Holland. Six of these only were present at the Hague on August 20, 1672, and, some by their inaction, others by their intervention, were thus responsible for the massacre which they might have prevented. Their president was Philip Jacob Boetselaer, Lord of Asperen. His father, the friend and confidant of William II., had been compromised in the prosecution for corruption of Muysch, the Secretary of the States-General, and excluded from the order of the nobles. He had married Muysch's daughter, whose sister was the wife of Buat, a former agent of the Orange party, who had paid with his life for his intrigues with the King of England. D'Asperen had done his best to cause this to be forgotten by again violently taking up the republican party from motives of ambition, but as soon as he thought that the restoration was inevitable he placed himself at the disposal of the Prince of Orange, who afterwards made him Master of his Household. The important functions with which he was invested giving him a foremost place in the events of the day, he was led—either from weakness of character, party spirit, or perhaps from a secret desire to avenge the death of his brother-in-law, Buat—to be guilty of the neglect of all his duties.

Not one, indeed, of the councillor deputies did his duty. Bosveldt of Haarlem alone remained at his post, but only to share with D'Asperen in his weakness. The others all disappeared in the afternoon, to escape, for fear of the danger, from the mission confided to them. It was thus that Beveren acted, fearing, no doubt, that he was too much under suspicion to be able to protect them, and preferring to take the cowardly part of holding himself aloof. The official report of their first meeting on August 20, the only record which has been preserved, shows that they had all assembled in the morning to consult as to sending to Groningen. Other more pressing measures soon took up their attention. The first whispers of a popular tumult, which they heard in their committee-room, gave them the alarm, and they at once proceeded to give information of it to the States of Holland, who were assembled to choose a successor to John de Witt.

After hearing D'Asperen's report, the States, in the absence of several members—amongst others Beverningh and Van Beuningen, detained, one in camp and the other on a diplomatic mission at Brussels—hastened to consider what precautions should be taken to insure public tranquillity. Following the advice of the nobles, they commissioned the councillor deputies to place under arms the three troops of cavalry to which the garrison at the Hague was reduced, and to make an arrangement with the magistrates of the town to assemble the most trustworthy of the burgher companies. They then hastened to send a messenger to the Prince of Orange, whose head-quarters were about eight leagues from the Hague, to ask him to come as soon as possible and restore order by his presence, sending also reinforcements without delay. At the suggestion, moreover, of Cornelius Hop, the Pensionary of Amsterdam, they decided to remain sitting to consider the necessary orders to be given.

The small troop of cavalry which the States of Holland had at their disposal was placed under the orders of a distinguished officer, Count Claude de Tilly, who was distantly related to the family of the great captain of the Thirty Years'

War, and had entered the service of the States-General, who gave him after the death of William II. the chief command of their army. The three companies, whose captains besides Count Tilly were M. de Steenhuyzen, and his son, who bore the title of Lord of Malde, were sent to take up their positions, one in the outer court of the palace of the States—the Buytenhof—where the guard-house of the garrison stood, the two others at the entrance of the Kneuterdijk avenue in the square, so as to cover the approaches to the prison on the two accessible sides. They received orders to maintain communication by keeping free the passage through the centre of the prison, which joined the court and the square. They only numbered 300 men, and showed a disposition which made their loyalty doubtful. The detachment which was sent early to the outer court of the palace, having encountered the most undisciplined of the burgher companies, made way for it to pass. At the same time the soldiers, having heard the rallying cry of the insurrectionists, 'Orange op, Witte onder,' raised their hats saying, 'We are of the same opinion.'

Still so loyal and bold a commander as Count Tilly sufficed to insure military discipline. The States had given him full powers. By the wording of their resolution the councillor deputies were charged 'to give all orders and take all necessary measures for the employment of the troops of cavalry now in garrison at the Hague, in putting down all meetings and gatherings, so as not only to prevent by the most vigorous measures any acts of insolence or violence, but to separate and dissipate the crowd, with instructions if gentle measures failed to fire upon the rioters and refractory persons and oblige them to retreat, employing force of arms to re-establish tranquillity everywhere. The immediate execution of these orders might have quelled the riot and allowed of the captives being released, but the councillor deputies thought themselves at liberty to modify them.' They enjoined the cavalry to remain only on the defensive within reach of the prison, and to await further orders from the States. Although wishing to use force against the mob they dared not risk it, fearing that a general riot would end in the pillaging, ruining, and killing of all in the place.

The arming of the burgher companies, to the number of from twelve to fifteen hundred men, had intimidated the councillor deputies. Against the advice of the States, all had been indiscriminately called to arms. Distributed in six divisions in the different quarters of the town, they were distinguished by the colours of their flags. The first company—orange, blue, and white—which had furnished the prison guard, took up its post in the outer court. It was the most peaceably disposed. Four others, more or less wavering and unreliable, took up their position in the square and the Kneuterdijk avenue. The last, bearing a blue flag, and comprising the artisans of the suburbs, whose attitude was the most threatening, was kept at a distance on the Singel canal on the other side of the palace of the States. To cover their responsibility, the councillor deputies thought it advisable to confer with the municipal magistrates. The former burgomaster of the town, John Mas, colonel of the burghers, and the pensionary of the Council, Jacob van den Hœven, too confidently declared that public peace would be re-established if some of the burgher officers went to Cornelius de Witt and his brother, under pretext of keeping guard over them until the Prince of Orange had given his orders. The councillor deputies communicated this proposal to the Court of Justice, which gave its consent and reported it to the States of Holland with a view to re-assuring them.

Whilst these proposals were taking the place of the thorough measures which should have been adopted, the disturbance was spreading through the burgher ranks. Mistrusting their comrades, some of the burghers of the first company wished to satisfy themselves of the presence of the prisoners. Having in vain attempted to get the outer door of the prison opened to them, they entered the yard by a party wall, and twelve of them, accompanied by two officers, passed through the inner wickets, which the gaoler was forced to open to them. Six of them with one officer detached themselves from this group to be conducted to the two brothers' room. They were received with a politeness which disarmed them.

John de Witt told them that he had always had confidence

in the townspeople, and would have no objection to follow them blindly in the midst of any danger, adding many gracious and persuasive words calculated to touch them. They retired satisfied, but could not succeed in appeasing the tumult which raged outside. The burghers of the other companies, not choosing to remain inactive, were searching the adjoining houses to make certain that no secret passages could favour an escape. A mason, named Klaptas, climbed on to the prison roof to be in readiness to fire if he saw either of the brothers attempting to get away. Mastering their anxiety, and only desirous of concealing it from each other, John and Cornelius de Witt showed themselves resigned to the fate which threatened them. Whilst partaking of a frugal meal, which John de Witt had calmly demanded of the gaoler, who was confounded by his unconcern of danger, the terrified maid came to tell them that the burghers outside were getting more and more excited. 'What do they want?' asked Cornelius, with proud calmness. 'To kill you,' she could not refrain from saying. 'If it is me they wish to harm,' he replied, 'let them come, I am here.' He had no hope left but that of saving his brother.

They had both finished their meal, when at about two o'clock Ruysch, somewhat tardily, presented himself. He brought with him the two burgher officers who were told off to guard them in accordance with the instructions of the magistrates of the Hague and the judges. To excuse their presence Ruysch alleged that Cornelius de Witt, not having yet submitted to the sentence of the Court, must be for the present kept under surveillance. John de Witt therefore concluded that he would not be detained, and was about to leave the room, hoping that when once more at liberty he might insure his brother s release. He was stopped by the burgher officers who had accompanied the Procurator-Fiscal. The latter, who had no further pretext for prolonging his captivity, could only say, 'Have a little patience, sir, the people are too excited.' John de Witt contented himself with procuring the release of his second clerk, Ounewaller, and his servant, Van der Wissel, who only consented to go in obedience

to him, after receiving his directions for placing his children in safety.

Ruysch hastily left with them, thus basely deserting his post. He left the officers who had accompanied him in the prison, and upon them now devolved the fate of the two brothers. These latter, after his departure, tried to win them over to their side. They made them sit down at their table, offering them wine, whilst John de Witt, whose presence of mind was imperturbable, employed all his arts of persuasion to convince them of the Ruard's innocence. His explanations, accompanied by appeals to their Christian principles, soon won them the good-will of their guardians, but too late to save them.

Still the time gained was something towards their rescue, and the firmness of Count Tilly gave hopes that the sedition might be held in check. He skilfully managed to surround the first company, which had charge of the prison, and on which he thought he could rely if he managed to cut it off from the others. To keep these latter away, he gradually drove them back from the square, which he wished to clear, in spite of the remonstrances of the burghers, who tried to force the ranks of the cavalry by pressing upon them so as to hamper their movements. The more determined hoped to intimidate him by pretending that they were going to fire. But Count Tilly, courageously advancing towards them and addressing their officers, asked them if they wished to fill the Hague with blood and slaughter, adding that they might possibly be the first to suffer for it. The officers, not caring to expose themselves, hastened to reply that such was not their intention, and contented themselves with requesting Count Tilly to withdraw with his troops. But he haughtily refused, and resolutely continued at his post.

The leaders of the plot, seeing that they could get nothing out of him through fear, had recourse to a subterfuge to rid themselves of him. A rumour had spread since the morning that, under the usual pretext of treason on the part of the magistrates, 2,000 peasants were on the march to the Hague, with the intention of sacking the town and repeating the acts of violence which had been committed at Delft. The

States of Holland had therefore enjoined their councillor deputies to arrange with the magistrates of the Hague to have the drawbridges raised and to put canals and ditches in a state of defence. These fears, though exaggerated, were not altogether imaginary. The inhabitants of some of the villages in the neighbourhood of the Hague had in fact assembled and shown some signs of seditious intentions, but the Receiver-General of the United Provinces, Jacob de Volberguen, who was visiting his property, had met them, and having got their pastor to harangue them, they promptly dispersed. This report had possibly been spread with a view to the deliverance of the Grand Pensionary and the Ruard, by obliging the burgher companies to free the approaches to the prison and proceed to the defence of the entrance to the town. It only led, however, to the ruin of the two brothers, by giving their enemies a pretext for sending away the cavalry and thus depriving them of their last support.

Taking advantage of this false report, the delegates of the burgher companies, first two sergeants, then two officers, presented themselves to the councillor deputies, to ask them to give directions to the cavalry to leave the town and repulse the peasants if they approached. Either from unjustifiable imprudence or from shameful fear, the councillor deputies had already separated without appointing any future meeting. Their president, D'Asperen, accompanied by Bosveldt of Haarlem and the Secretary of the States, Simon van Beaumont, had gone to the house of the clerk of their committee, De Wilde, close to the Town Hall. After having refused the sergeants, Asperen and Bosveldt were weak enough to enter into a discussion with the officers and ask them if they would undertake to guarantee the security of the prisoners. Although the officers promised to see to this, the councillor deputies, reduced to two, not a sufficient number to come to any decision, were still hesitating when they were joined by the magistrates of the Hague, John Mas and Van der Hœven, who had already been in communication with them earlier in the day. These latter were not in connivance with the rioters, as a month later they were deposed as being suspected by the

Orange faction, but they nevertheless made themselves the representatives of the policy of concession, which flatters itself it can quell disturbance by disarming resistance. They represented to the councillor deputies the necessity for at once drawing off the cavalry, demanding this as a pledge of peace.

Faithless to the instructions given them by the States of Holland, as well as to their own promises, D'Asperen and Bosveldt shamefully acquiesced in the demand made of them. They sent a verbal order to Count Tilly to give up his post and occupy the avenues of the town. Not believing it possible that they could be either so weak or so wicked as to become the accomplices of the rioters, Count Tilly, in spite of the vociferations of the mob and the clamours of the burghers, declared that he would only obey a written order. He foresaw the disastrous consequences of a retreat, and was determined not to be made responsible for it. In spite of his courageous refusal, the councillor deputies had neither scruples nor remorse. Meekly submitting to the will of the populace, which had been forced upon them, they charged their clerk, De Wilde, to draw up instructions to be signed by D'Asperen, which Count Tilly must obey. They enjoined him to withdraw with the two troops of cavalry which occupied the square. He was to employ them in guarding the four bridges which served as gateways to the Hague, whilst the third company, commanded by M. de Steenhuyzen, remained on the look-out, in the outer court of the palace. When he received this fatal order Count Tilly had no longer any doubt as to the fate of the two brothers. 'I obey,' he said, 'but MM. de Witt are lost.' He was the only man on this lamentable day who did his duty. He kept the orders given him to the day of his death; and eleven years later, being quartered at Maestricht, he gave them to the Grand Pensionary's cousin, Vivien, to read, deploring the obligation he had been under to submit to them.

His departure left the way open to the assassins. Their leader was Henry Verhoef, a goldsmith, and member of the company under the blue flag, whose actual captain he was, and a deadly enemy of the brothers De Witt, for whom he

intended the two balls with which he had that morning loaded his musket. His principal accomplices were Van Bankhem, sheriff; Van Baelen, surgeon; Van Soenen, notary; D'Assigny, engraver; Maas, sculptor; Van Vaalen, postman; Vredemborg, miller; Van Dorsten, wine merchant; and Van Olten, provision dealer. The obscurity of their names ought not to shield them from infamy.

It was to the improvised head of this band of ruffians that the magistrates of the Hague had now to look for the deliverance and safety of their prisoners. With this hope they submitted to the humiliation of a parley with Verhoef, appearing to accept him as an ambassador from the rioters. The colonel of the burghers, John Mas, went to seek him with his company, and conducted him to a neighbouring house, where he implored him to spare the De Witts, assuring him that the magistrates of the Hague would be eternally grateful to him for so great a service and would reward him for it. Verhoef interrupted him with these threatening words, 'Those who intercede for rascals are no better than themselves,' and having emptied two glasses of wine he returned to his company and gave the order to march.

Notice was immediately given to the members of the magistracy, who were assembled in the Town Hall, with the exception of the old bailiff, De Veer, uncle of John and Cornelius de Witt, whose great age excused him. They immediately sent the burgomaster Groenevelt to Verhoef, to beg him to come to them. He consented, and reassured by the presence of a post of burghers who were keeping guard before the Town Hall and who promised to come to his assistance at the first call, Verhoef entered the council chamber unarmed, and the magistrates had the baseness to welcome him humbly. Verhoef recalled them to what was due to themselves; refusing to take the chair offered him, he begged them to be seated and to cover their heads. Groenevelt spared no arguments to persuade him to leave the Grand Pensionary and the Ruard under the guardianship of two delegates from each of the burgher companies until the arrival of the Prince of Orange. But Verhoef was immovable, declaring that he

had other things to do than to guard traitors. 'What do you mean to do?' asked Van der Hœven. 'To drag the De Witts out of prison and break their necks,' replied Verhoef, 'even if I have to do it myself. Only have patience for half an hour, and I will place their hearts in your hands.' Horror closed the magistrates' mouths, as Verhoef at parting threw them this last menace, 'If you belong to the De Witts' faction you are all lost.' They ended, however, by plucking up courage, and fearing lest the blood of the innocent should fall upon their heads they so far retrieved themselves as to make one last effort to save them, though unfortunately too late.

Whilst the councillor deputies and the members of the States were holding aloof, the magistrates decided that they would go in a body to the prison to interpose their authority. But Van Bankhem and the former burgomaster, Pieterson, who had been indicted for embezzlement, preceded them through back streets, directing their followers to intercept the progress of the municipal authorities, and before the latter could arrive the signal for the final acts of violence had been given. As soon as he left the Town Hall, Verhoef rejoined his company, which advanced with loud outcries upon the outer court of the palace, without any opposition on the part of the last detachment of cavalry which had remained after Count Tilly's departure in spite of the demands of the better disposed townspeople. They thus got near the prison, the approaches to which they sought to occupy. The orange, white, and blue company had, it is true, remained on guard, and faithful to their orders closed their ranks against the new comers. Fearing, however, a collision, and threatened with an attack, they ended by giving way, whilst Verhoef, having spread a report that it was only a question of transferring Cornelius de Witt and his brother from the prison to the Town Hall, went to satisfy himself that the companies stationed in the square and in the Vivien avenue would not interfere. His accomplices waited impatiently for him on the threshold of the prison, before which the blue company was arrayed. His cry of 'Drag the rascals out from here!' was responded to by a discharge of musketry. The door was riddled with

balls, one of which penetrated to the wall of the staircase, which bears the mark to this day.

Strongly bolted and protected by an iron bar, the door withstood this attack. Verhoef was preparing to break it down with hammers which he sent for to a blacksmith in the neighbourhood, when the gaoler, terrified at the threats uttered against him, consented to open it. It was now four o'clock. Verhoef and his companions burst into the prison, seized the gaoler, who let himself be maltreated rather than conduct them to the prisoners, tore the keys of the rooms from him, and rushed up the stairs into the one which was the last refuge of the De Witts. It was open, and the assassins had but to cross the threshold to find themselves in the presence of their victims.

The two brothers had heard them come without a tremor. Broken down by his sufferings from the torture, Cornelius de Witt was stretched upon his bed, his head covered by a cap, and wearing a loose dressing-gown. John de Witt, who had kept on his velvet mantle, was seated beside a table at the foot of the bed. To fortify himself against the terrors of death and the agonies of the last hour, he was reading the Bible to his brother.

The burgher officers who were guarding them tried in vain to protect them from their murderers; they were violently repulsed, accused of having been bribed, and threatened with sharing the fate of the two prisoners. Impatient to bring matters to an end, Verhoef, followed by his band, ran to Cornelius de Witt's bed, and roughly pulling back the curtains, cried, 'You must die, traitor! Pray to God and prepare yourself.' 'What harm have I done you?' asked his victim calmly. 'You attempted the life of the Prince. Make haste and get up at once,' replied Verhoef. Proud and resigned, as he had been before the executioner, with his hands clasped, the Ruard offered up a last prayer at the moment when a blow from the butt end of a musket, directed against him and turned aside by Verhoef, struck one of the posts of the bed and shattered it. He was desired to dress himself, and whilst putting on one of his stockings was so threatened with

a dagger that he had to get up at once. Separated from his brother on the entry of the assassins, John de Witt, after a futile attempt to get hold of a sword that he might die defending himself, boldly advanced towards them and asked whether it was their intention to kill him also. 'Yes,' was the reply, 'traitor, rascal, thief, you shall have the same fate as your brother.' At the same moment the notary Van Soenen struck him on the back of the head with a pike, causing blood to flow. The Grand Pensionary quietly took off his hat and bound the wound with his handkerchief. Folding his arms, he cried with a steady voice, 'Do you want to take my life? Then strike me down at your feet,' and calmly presented his breast. Verhoef interposed to prevent the brothers being murdered in the prison: 'It is on the scaffold that these rascals must die,' he said, wishing thus to avenge the executions of Buat and Van der Graef.

By his orders John and Cornelius de Witt were dragged from their room and violently pushed towards the winding staircase, of which they had twenty-nine steps to descend. The Grand Pensionary was hurried away first, whilst his brother, wounded by a blow from a plank and nearly knocked over, was precipitated down the first flight. Just able to turn, he held out his arm to him, their hands joined in one rapid pressure, and with a last look they cried to one another, 'Farewell, brother!' Having reached the bottom of the stairs, they were unable to exchange another word and lost sight of each other.

Verhoef had made John de Witt go first, keeping close to him as if to take upon himself the executioner's office. Troubled, as he himself declared, by the fire of his glance, he would not have ventured to deal the first blow, even with the aid of two accomplices, had John de Witt held any weapon in his hand with which to defend himself. He confessed even that he was confounded by the coolness with which the Grand Pensionary, having nothing left to save but his honour, exonerated himself from the charge of treason brought against him, saying, 'If all had acted like me, not a single town would have been surrendered.' At the sound of these

words, the murderers, thinking that their prey was escaping them, accused Verhoef of accepting John de Witt's purse and watch as a bribe. To exculpate himself, he pushed him away and gave him up to the band of madmen who were waiting at the door of the prison to conduct him and his brother sixty paces farther towards the scaffold in sight of his house on the Kneuterdijk. Their frenzy prevented them from following the instructions they had received, and the two prisoners were massacred before they had reached the usual place of execution. Dragged rather than led after his brother, behind whom he had remained, Cornelius de Witt was the first to perish under the blows of the assassins who seized him. 'What do you want me to do?' he asked them; 'where do you want me to go?'

Forced to advance at the point of the daggers and pikes, he had scarcely got beyond the archway of the prison, and had just entered the square which adjoins it, when, being closely pressed against the railing of the pond, he stumbled, fell to the ground and was trampled under foot. Two burghers, a wine merchant named Van Ryp and a butcher named Louw, struck him down with the butt ends of their muskets. He was raising himself by his hands when an engraver, Cornelius d'Assigny, lieutenant of the company under the blue flag, struck him with his dagger, whilst at the same time a sailor cut his head open with a hatchet. They then threw themselves upon him, trampling on his body.

His brother's death struggle was simultaneous with his own. Leaving the prison bareheaded, his face bleeding from the blow he had received with the pike, John de Witt had covered his face with his mantle, using it as a shield to ward off the blows which threatened him on every side.

Delivered from Verhoef, who, himself struck by an ill-directed blow from a musket, had found it dangerous to remain beside him, he still sought to escape, and kept repeating to those who surrounded him, 'What are you doing? This is not what you wanted.' But the pitiless burghers of the company under the blue flag repulsed him, closing their ranks when he attempted with much difficulty to force a passage through the

double line which he could not overcome. He was turning back, overwhelmed with horror on hearing the ferocious outcries which announced the murder of his brother, when he was struck from behind by a pistol shot fired by a lieutenant of marines, John van Vaalen, whose brother was one of Verhoef's band. Seeing him waver and then fall, the assassin cried out, 'Behold the downfall of the Perpetual Edict.'

Bruised and dying, John de Witt still had strength to raise his head and hold up his clasped hands to Heaven, when he overheard this last insult, which was not spared him: 'You pray to God! You do not believe there is one. You have long since denied Him by your treason and your villanies.' At the same moment another ruffian, an innkeeper named Peter Verhaguen, left the ranks of the company, and having failed in discharging his gun, which missed fire, he struck the Grand Pensionary a violent blow on the head with it which knocked him down insensible, whilst several burghers of the same company, amongst others a butcher named Christopher de Haan, fired point blank at him and ended his life. It was then half-past four in the afternoon.

Of the two great citizens thus sacrificed as enemies of the country they had faithfully and gloriously served, there remained but two corpses, and even they were not spared. Having laid them together, the burghers of the company nearest the prison forming a circle fired a volley as a sign of rejoicing. The bodies were then carried to the scaffold by means of the muskets, the crossbelts forming ropes, to drag them. A sailor tied them back to back and hung them by their feet to the lower rungs of the gibbet, which was constructed in the form of a strappado, exclaiming that such culprits were not worthy to be hung by their heads. Their clothes were all torn off and divided in fragments. One of the principal actors in the scene, Adrien van Vaalen, having obtained possession of John de Witt's velvet mantle, ran through the streets with it, crying, 'Behold the rags of the traitor, the great John!'

Amidst the yells of a mob thirsting for blood, the two victims were given up after their death to the most savage treatment. The first two fingers of John de Witt's right

hand were first cut off as if in expiation of the use he had made of them in signing and swearing to the Perpetual Edict. This was followed up by the most horrible and revolting mutilations, the more fanatical urging one another on. One of those who was thus dismembering the bodies, in a last excess of savage ferocity cut off a piece of flesh and boasted that he would eat it. The remains of their limbs were put up to auction. An eyewitness says, 'I bought one of John de Witt's fingers for two sous and a pot of beer.' 'They seemed,' he adds, 'like famished wolves, who, having found a corpse, were quarrelling over it to alleviate their voracious hunger.'

The burgher company had remained under arms to gloat over this hideous spectacle. Terror or hatred detained around the scaffold those who had been either the cowardly encouragers or the unabashed accomplices of these horrible insults. The magistrates of the Hague, who had been unable to reach the prison and protect the two brothers, had withdrawn to a neighbouring inn. Trembling and distracted, they showed themselves at the window as if to give their assent to the violence which was being committed under their eyes, while the principal enemies of the Grand Pensionary mingled with the crowd round the scaffold, thus satisfying their implacable resentment.

Rear-Admiral Cornelius Tromp, who had never forgiven John de Witt for the disgrace he had sustained in consequence of his misunderstanding with Ruyter, came to enjoy his base revenge. Wishing to remain concealed he had taken the precaution of pulling his hat over his eyes, but he was nevertheless recognised and pointed out by one of the assistants. Welcomed with enthusiasm by the crowd, he was asked, 'What does M. Tromp think of this death?' 'It had to be,' he replied with indifference.

One of the most fiery of the pastors at the Hague, Simon Simonides, whom the States had forbidden to preach on account of his seditious utterances, had not shrunk from encouraging the assassination by his presence. He was withdrawing in silence, when one of those who had assisted in

dragging the two corpses called out to him from the top of the scaffold, 'Are they properly hung, sir?' Observing that the head of the Grand Pensionary, who was taller than his brother, touched the platform of the scaffold, Simonides pointed to him, saying, 'Hang him up one rung higher.' The next day, Sunday, in his sermon at the New Church, he justified the crime, calling the assassins the new Maccabees who had bravely fought the unbelievers, and declaring that they merited a reward as having been the instruments of Divine vengeance.

Darkness alone separated the spectators, and the day had nearly ended in fresh acts of violence. The more unruly of the townspeople, over-excited by their libations, wished to pillage the Grand Pensionary's house, whilst the soldiers sent to guard it broke open the cellar and extracted the money, encouraged by their lieutenant, who seized and appropriated John de Witt's portrait.

Some of the members of the States, amongst others Van der Aa, the burgomaster of Rotterdam, would have had their throats cut had they not evaded by flight the fate which threatened them. It was only with great difficulty that the captains of the burgher companies got them back to their respective quarters. They withdrew with flags flying and in triumph as if returning from some great military exploit. 'It is nearly eight o'clock at night,' writes an eye-witness at the termination of the day, 'and there is great joy amongst the people as if a fair were going on.'

Towards half-past nine Verhoef reappeared on the scene in a last burst of fury. He wished to justify his crime by proving the guilt of his victims. With this view he attempted to create a belief in John de Witt's treason, and pretended to have discovered proof of it in a note addressed to Beverningh, which he found in the Grand Pensionary's clothes. This letter was merely a communication to Beverningh on the subject of the encampment of the troops at the head-quarters of Bodegrave, and on their proposed movements. Before taking it to the lawyer, Sterreweld, to get an authentic copy, he declared that a further punishment was deserved.

Returning to the scaffold with a knife in his hand, he disembowelled the bodies and took out the two hearts, which he intended, he said, to offer to the Prince of Orange and the King of England. He carried them away bleeding and put them on the inn table, where they became the sport of the assassins assembled there. Verhoef kept them a long time by him as trophies, and several years passed before they were buried. An hour later, in the darkness and solitude of the night, by the flickering light of torches, a painter approached the scaffold. It was John Baan, he who by a singular contrast had been commissioned five years before to paint the portrait of Cornelius de Witt in the height of his glory, on his return from his victorious expedition to England. He sketched the two bodies hanging on the gibbet, covered with wounds and torn in fragments, and thus preserved to posterity the ghastly picture of this scene of carnage.

Horrified at the catastrophe which their councillor deputies had permitted, the States of Holland assembled that evening. Only a very few of the members, about ten or twelve, answered to the summons, amongst whom was Vivien, who had courageously remained at his post. Utterly powerless, whilst the great minister who had so long had their confidence was, with his brother, being cruelly murdered, the States had not even interfered to enforce respect to the bodies of the victims, for which they could now only insure burial.

At seven o'clock in the evening they desired the councillor deputies to have them conveyed to a safe place. But the latter waited some hours longer before they executed this order. At midnight the two bodies were taken down from the scaffold by John de Witt's servant Van der Wissel and his coachman Jacob. A lawyer named Theophilus Neranus, and De Witt's shoemaker, Thomas Ryswyck, whose family John de Witt had assisted, courageously offered to assist them.

The brave sister of the two victims, Joanna de Zwyndrecht, received the precious remains which were brought back to her, neither fear nor despair being capable of disturbing that strength of mind which she had in common with her brothers. When she withdrew to join John de Witt's

children, who had been left in her charge, her nephew Anthony de Veer, son of the old bailiff of the Hague, undertook the cares of burial. The letter which he wrote the next morning to his aunt, gives the minutest details of the funeral ceremony. Before morning, two men on horseback escorted the funeral car which contained the bodies of John and Cornelius de Witt to their last abode. They were buried in the New Church, near the pulpit, in the family vault which had been opened four years previously to receive the coffin of the Grand Pensionary's wife. Their arms had been secretly brought in, to be hung up according to custom over their tombs. The next day the populace of the Hague, having had notice of this, took possession of them, broke them in pieces, and were nearly violating the tombs.

Bernard Costerus, writing at the time, says, 'On Saturday, August 20, 1672, a tragedy was publicly enacted at the Hague as horrible as any that antiquity or a barbarous people could offer, in the assassination, and dismemberment of the bodies, of the brothers De Witt. I heard of it from my father, who had been sent on a mission to the Hague by the Town Council of Woerden, and who was a dismayed spectator of this horrible massacre. His hair stood on end whenever he thought of it.' 'The deaths of the Grand Pensionary and his brother are horrible,' wrote Huyghens, the great mathematician, who several years before had carried on a scientific correspondence with John de Witt. 'When one sees such things,' he added, 'it seems as if the Epicureans were not wrong in saying, *Versari in republica non est sapientis.*' The philosopher Spinoza, to whom the Grand Pensionary made an allowance of 200 florins, and who, to his honour, remained loyal to friendship and gratitude, writes to Leibnitz that his host at the Hague had prevented his going out for fear he should be torn in pieces; otherwise, he added, 'I should have gone that night to the scene of the massacre and posted up a paper with these words written on it, *Ultimi barbarorum.*'

These acts of violence committed by an unbridled mob could not but give some secret satisfaction to the enemy encamped on the invaded territory of the republic. They

flattered themselves that by means of them they could more easily achieve the conquest of the United Provinces, and the Commandant of Utrecht wrote at once to Louis XIV.'s ministers, 'that this affair, which had produced much consternation amongst all honest men, could not fail to have a good effect upon the King's service.' And when the catastrophe was described to the Prince of Condé as regrettable, it was entirely from a personal point of view, one of his financial agents mentioning it to him as a serious injury to his speculations in the Indies, 'as it would keep down the shares.' A singular way of looking upon so atrocious a crime; and what a lesson in philosophy may be derived from such a commentary on the most tragical of events!

Medals were struck in commemoration of the deed, and along with those engraved by the enemies of the victims, which represent them as having suffered the penalty of their power and of their pride, others, more or less tardily, did them the justice they deserved. Amongst the latter, the finest, which is of gold and has been preserved with the records of the family, bears in relief a bust of Cornelius de Witt, attired in uniform, in remembrance of his naval campaign, and that of John de Witt in his dress as minister of the States of Holland, with the double inscription, *Hic armis maximus ille toga*, and this line from Horace, *Integer vitæ scelerisque purus*. On the reverse appear the bodies of the two brothers being devoured by wild beasts; beneath them, with the date of the massacre, this Latin inscription, *Nobile par fratrum, sævo furor ore trucidat*, and below that again this funeral eulogy:

> Nunc redeunt animis ingentia Consulis acta,
> Et formidati sceptris oracla Ministri.

Before the two victims were delivered up to their assassins, John de Witt's children—his three daughters and two sons—had been placed in safety by his servant and his clerk, according to the Grand Pensionary's last instructions to them when they left the prison. At about half-past two the orphans were taken to the sisters Deborah and Martha Coster, the family laundresses, who were aunts of Ounewaller. They spent the

night there in cruel anguish, the emotion of the Grand Pensionary's daughter being so great that a report spread of her death. The next day in the early morning, Joanna de Zwyndrecht sent them in a carriage under the charge of the faithful Ounewaller to their maternal uncle, Peter de Graeff, at Ilpendam near Amsterdam. Their father had in his will appointed him their guardian, in partnership with their other uncles, Gerard Bicker van Swieten and De Zwyndrecht, and their cousin Vivien.

As to Jacob de Witt, who had remained at his son's house, whence he could hear the outcries of the murderers around the prison, he would willingly have awaited the assassins, but he was dragged away from the dwelling where the fury of the populace would probably not have spared him.

He resigned his post at the Audit Office and retired to weep over the deaths of those who had been the pride and joy of his old age, and having returned to Dordrecht, survived them to his sorrow for more than a year, dying January 10, 1674. 'You have no doubt heard,' writes Wicquefort to De Groot, 'that M. de Witt, senior, is dead, and that he has been buried at Dordrecht with much ceremony at midday, with bells tolling and followed by many people as well as by his grandsons.'

Cornelius de Witt's wife, who had been spared the harrowing sight so bravely borne by her sister-in-law Joanna de Zwyndrecht, gave proof of similar strength of mind, and showed herself equally above all weakness. Eager to know her husband's fate, she left Dordrecht, where she had hitherto remained, to direct the inquiries the result of which were to be laid before the judges, and, accompanied by her eldest son Jacob, started for the Hague. Hearing at Delft of the sentence which restored Cornelius de Witt to liberty whilst banishing him, she was hastening the speed of her carriage that she might be the first to accompany him into exile, when, at Ryswick, an hour short of the Hague, she met a passer-by who informed her of the rising of the people and the massacre of the two brothers. He entreated her to retrace her steps, and having been unable to find a refuge with the pastor of the village, who like a coward refused her admittance, she

embarked for Rotterdam, where she passed the night with her sister-in-law, Maria Hoeuft.

The next day, as she was returning to Dordrecht, she met on the boat a passenger just come from the Hague. He had been a witness of the scene, and gave an account of it to the bystanders, winding up by exhibiting a finger which had been cut from Cornelius de Witt's hand.

Maria, who had listened in silence, advanced towards him, and asked to look at the finger which he was showing. She examined it with reverent attention, and said suddenly, 'This finger was yesterday still on the hand of my beloved husband, I know it well.' At these words the passenger, who had not expected to find himself face to face with the victim's wife, fell down overwhelmed with emotion, and all who were with him on the boat were struck with pity, whilst Maria remained calm and collected in her sorrow.

She had already found a refuge against affliction in the Christian resignation whence she drew all her strength. The letter which she wrote from Rotterdam on the very evening of the fatal day to her sister-in-law, Joanna de Zwyndrecht, gives touching evidence of this. 'I cannot,' she writes to her, 'but wish you the consolation which has helped me, that it is God's pleasure that it should be so, and we must therefore bear the blow with submission. As regards my dear husband, I should wish that all might be done with the greatest simplicity and in silence, without hanging up his arms or making any display of mourning. May the Almighty God strengthen you with His Holy Spirit, to Whose keeping I commend you!'

To preserve to the family a record of the disaster in which all her happiness had foundered, she wrote the following lines in the private note-book in which Cornelius de Witt set down the events of his domestic life: 'This day, August 20, my dear husband was horribly murdered at the Hague by the burgher faction, with our worthy brother, John de Witt. He was in his fiftieth year, having been forty-nine years old on June 19, 1672. He had been taken on the last day of July to the "Conciergerie" of the Court of Justice, and from thence on August 6 to prison, there to be cruelly tortured on the sole

accusation of an infamous person, William Tichelaer, barber of Piershill. May God preserve all men from such misfortunes as those by which the 20th of this month has been so sorrowfully signalised.'

She retired after her widowhood to her mother's house at Rotterdam amidst the happy recollections of her life as a young girl, and survived her husband thirty-four years, having seen both her sons and two of her daughters die before her. Like Deborah, the heroine of the Old Testament, to whom she was compared in some lines addressed to her on her last birthday, she remained till the age of seventy-four, the guardian of the tombs of a family whose glory and misfortunes she had alike shared. Patriotic and religious feelings were a joint patrimony in this noble family. The victim's brother-in-law, Diederick Hoeuft, wrote to their sister Joanna de Zwyndrecht, the day after their death, the following remarkable letter, in which the thought of public welfare softens the bitterness of private misfortune: 'What will become of us? Whatever wicked men may do, God's will must be accomplished; and if God wills that this event should contribute to re-establish concord in the country, the corpses of those for whom we weep will have helped towards the reconciliation.'

Three days after the assassination the States of Holland sent to the Grand Pensionary's house for the seal of the province, which had remained in his hands. Informed moreover by the councillor deputies that seals had been placed upon the cupboards and boxes containing his papers, they appointed commissioners to take possession of them. One of the nobles, Van Schaegen, Lord of Heenvliet, who had succeeded Cornelius de Witt as Ruard of Putten, and some of the deputies of Dordrecht, Amsterdam, and Alkmaar were charged with this mission. The States also sent the new Grand Pensionary Fagel, and their secretary, Simon van Beaumont, having decided that the councillor deputies should be commissioned to assist them.

The Grand Pensionary's papers included bundles of public and private letters written to him, and the minutes, bound in yearly numbers, of those which he wrote or caused to be

written for him. They form a series of volumes containing the history of his ministry and of his life.

The States resolved to have them taken to the Record Office, where this important collection has remained intact. They did not think it necessary, at any rate for the time being, to take any notice of the claims of the children's guardians, who demanded the custody of all the private letters, until they had made a preliminary investigation of John de Witt's correspondence, which resulted in his complete justification. The commissioners to whom the States entrusted this examination acknowledged his untiring industry, his punctilious regularity and his incorruptible fidelity. They declared that 'it was greatly to be desired that other magistrates should concern themselves as much about the welfare of their country as the Grand Pensionary seemed to have done.' Questioned as to what they had found in his papers, one of them made a reply which deserves to be recorded, anticipating as it did the judgment of history, 'Nothing but honour and virtue.'

The Prince of Orange had done nothing to hinder or to prevent the sanguinary drama which, as a contemporary writes, effectually prevented the hostile faction from doing him any harm. He appeared rather to encourage it and to give it his sanction. He had in fact, on June 21, 1672, received into his camp the first assassins whom John de Witt had escaped. A few weeks later he refused to intervene in favour of Cornelius de Witt when denounced by Tichelaer for an attempt on his life, although he could have had no doubt as to his innocence. He was absent from the Hague on the day on which the Grand Pensionary and his brother fell victims to the populace, but he had been there two days before.

On August 17, 1672, he entered the Assembly of the States-General to oppose the removal of Ruyter's fleet, which he wished to keep on the shores of Zealand, and he was still at the Hague on the 18th when he wrote to Prince John Maurice of Nassau, who was in command at Muyden, to ask him to meet him the following evening at his head-quarters at Alphen, where he was about to return. He did not, therefore, quit

the Hague without a knowledge of the sentence which condemned Cornelius de Witt to torture; and he coldly left the executioner to do his work, when he had but to say a word to stop it.

On August 20, the day of the massacre, he went at eight o'clock in the morning to Woerden, which had remained outside the lines of defence. He inspected the ramparts, but seemed to have no idea of fortifying the town. Bernard Costerus, who accompanied the Prince in this rapid tour, remarks that 'many reasonable and observant people at that time were disposed to think that, having been informed of what was passing at the Hague, he wished to establish an alibi.' 'According to them,' he adds, 'there being a direct and easy road to Woerden, with not more than ten leagues to traverse, the Prince could easily, after his early inspection, have been at the Hague by three o'clock in the afternoon.' It was further added that he had gone there incognito, and that the withdrawal of the cavalry, to whose care the brothers De Witt had been confided, had taken place at his orders, the command having been given by a noble who was known to be in his intimacy.

Gourville, on the other hand, relates 'that the Prince told him that upon hearing the noise of the excited populace, when M. John de Witt was on his way to the prison, some friends being with him he sent them to see what it was.' These testimonies are too untrustworthy to be of much value. They have not that appearance of authenticity or even of likelihood which could give them weight against the official reports on which reliance can be placed. 'At the time of the iniquitous death of M. de Witt,' said the Grand Pensionary Fagel in the Assembly of the States, a few days after the murder, 'it was stated the Prince was too kind-hearted, and that the work must therefore be done before he arrived at the Hague.' The best proof moreover that, instead of going to the Hague, William III. had returned from Woerden to his head-quarters, was that he himself there received, according to all appearances, the urgent message sent by the States of Holland at the first news of the beginning of the tumult.

However this may be, it is nevertheless averred, according to a record of the time, that the Prince of Orange secretly employed some tools of his own, amongst others the servants of his natural uncle, M. de Zuylesteyn, and other such scoundrels, who had done all in their power to augment the riot and let loose the popular fury, to insure the massacre of the brothers De Witt. He took no notice, moreover, of the appeal of the States of Holland, though he had but to go to the Hague, or even to send a messenger with an order of release, to save the lives of the two victims. He preferred to stand aloof, in which he was inexcusable. His conduct on that disastrous day, as well as during the weeks following it, might well give rise to suspicions, and in spite of the appearances which he kept up, it throws a dark shadow over the brightness of his renown.

As to his feelings, or what he allowed to be seen of them, on hearing of the deed, there are many contradictory reports. He was just sitting down to supper when he received a second message, dated seven o'clock in the evening, in which the States of Holland informed him with full details of the assassination of the Grand Pensionary and his brother, which they stigmatised as 'horrible,' demanding that it should be severely punished. It may be doubted, considering his usual reserve, whether the Prince ever said to De Gourville 'that he had given no orders that MM. de Witt should be killed, but that when he heard of their deaths, without having had a hand in it, he could not but feel somewhat relieved.' A witness who was with him when the message from the States arrived, M. de Benthem, seems worthy of more credit when some years later he writes, 'I never saw him so overcome as when he heard of the tragical end which by God's permission had come upon the two brothers who had always been opposed to him.' It was this communication made to John de Witt's son which induced him without scruple eleven years after his father's death to ask for an audience with the Prince of Orange. Samson, the historian who wrote the life of William III., also states that he expressed his regret for the fate of the two victims, 'allowing of no insults to the memory

of the Ruard, and declaring his belief that the Grand Pensionary's opposition to himself had arisen from no personal hatred.' He considered him, according to Burnet, 'one of the greatest men of his time, and recognised him as a faithful servant of the State.'

The Princess-Dowager of Orange on her side, speaking of the massacre of the two brothers, said, according to a statement made to Peter de Graeff, 'I do not much care about the Ruard, but I am much grieved for the Grand Pensionary, that so noble an intelligence should not have saved him from such a death.'

The Prince of Orange was, however, responsible, not only for the consideration he showed towards the murderers, but for the rewards he gave them. The moment he arrived at the Hague, on the evening of the day after the deed, the States sent commissioners to him to represent that they were at the mercy of the rioters and to beg him to protect them, by vigorous measures, against the ringleaders, who, according to a contemporary, were only ten or twelve in number. The Stadtholder answered them as usual in an evasive manner, alleging that there seemed to him too many culprits to be arrested, and that he did not think strong measures advisable.

This condonation by the Prince of Orange of riot and crime is thus estimated by a friend of the family in a letter of condolence written to Cornelius de Witt's brother-in-law, Anthony de Bercken: 'I fear to live under those who, having neither the power, the authority, nor the courage, to punish such crimes, leave a furious mob to perpetrate unheard-of atrocities. *Impunitas peccandi maxima est illecebra.*'

William III., not satisfied with showing this indulgence to the principal authors of this deed, did not shrink from becoming their benefactor. He publicly honoured with his confidence Albert Nierop, the judge who had been the most determined to destroy Cornelius de Witt, and who had even, it seems, given the signal for the rising of the populace and the massacre of the two brothers. Tichelaer, to whom a large

reward had been paid during his detention, received a pension of 400 florins, which was regularly paid, and even doubled, during the whole of William III.'s life. He moreover obtained the office of deputy-bailiff of Putten, which some say had been secretly promised to him by M. de Zuylesteyn when he made his first denunciation. Finally he obtained the annulling of the sentence of the Lower Courts convicting him of perjury and contempt of court, and the protection of the Stadtholder procured him a reversal of the sentence.

Others whose crimes were no less, shared the same favour. Borrebagh, one of Van der Graef's accomplices in the attempt at assassination which the Grand Pensionary had escaped, was reappointed Post-master. The sheriff, Van Bankhem, who had been amongst the foremost in helping the assassins on the terrible day of August 20, was made bailiff at the Hague, thus becoming the First Magistrate of the town in which the States held their sittings, as if publicly to insult them; and scarcely had he entered upon his office, than he took advantage of it to remunerate his accomplices. Two years later, when he had been prohibited from taking the sacrament on account of the scandal of his conduct, the Court of Justice demanded his dismissal, but William III. intervened to avert a condemnation which he said ought to be spared to one of the most faithful adherents of his House. Verhoef alone, by his subsequent excesses, prevented his protectors from giving him any proof of their good-will. Vainly recommended by Rear-Admiral Tromp, who had the audacity to ask Prince John Maurice of Nassau to employ him as head of the volunteers, he had to submit at last to the sentence of imprisonment for life, which was pronounced against him after he had for five years defied justice and braved all reprimands.

This impunity and glorification of crime only encouraged the persecutions which were carried on against all whom suspicion pointed at, either from their relationship to the victims or from similar political opinions imputed to them. One of John de Witt's nearest relations, Ascanius van Sypesteyn, chief of the military train, was assassinated whilst with the

army, without his murderers being discovered. Another of the Grand Pensionary's cousins, Focanus, bailiff of Bois-le-Duc, being denounced by his coachman as having planned an attempt against the life of the Prince of Orange, was very nearly being condemned; but, more fortunate than Cornelius de Witt, he escaped by the too manifest contradictions of his accuser. Peter Delacourt also, the chief publicist of the republican party, was very nearly paying with his life for his opposition to the promotion of the Prince of Orange. He was obliged to seek refuge at Antwerp, where he found De Groot, who had escaped by flight from a similar vengeance. The lawyer, Theophilus Neranus, who had so courageously aided John de Witt's servant to render the last honours to the two victims, was accused of distributing a pamphlet against the assassins, entitled, 'Dutch Venison, cooked by England, and cut up at the Hague,' and summoned before the Court; whilst his brother Issac, who had printed it, was arbitrarily imprisoned in the Town Hall at Rotterdam.

Ruyter himself was not secure against the fury of popular feeling, either by the greatness of his renown or by the services he had just rendered to the republic, in saving the United Provinces through the instrumentality of the fleet. The loyal attachment he had never ceased to show towards the Grand Pensionary de Witt and his brother made him a mark for the hatred of the mob, who represented him as an enemy to the Orange party. Assailed by a body of rioters, his house was only saved from pillage thanks to the firmness of a burgher captain and the assistance of a company of the burghers of Amsterdam, whose conduct was a reproach to those at the Hague.

Either purposely or from carelessness, the safe-conduct sent him by William III. was only given to him, some weeks later, when all danger was over. He was, however, exposed to an attempt against his life in the following month, after his return from the fleet, and only escaped by the courageous interposition of his servant. 'How I pity our country and the honest men who are still in it,' wrote De Groot the following year, 'for having been exposed to the most degrading servitude, without

the power of appeasing the hatred of their enemies, or the rage and fury of their fellow-citizens.'

At the instigation of the Stadtholder, the States of Holland resigned themselves to the humiliation of an amnesty, but as they only granted it with a threat of exercising the greatest severity in the future, the Prince of Orange persuaded them not to publish it until weariness of disorder had re-established public peace and made all repression useless.

The violence of the reaction which everywhere threatened the magistrates of the towns who had remained in office could not but profit William III. The bodies of John and Cornelius de Witt, thrown as it were at his feet, served as a blood-stained pedestal to the power which he was eager to grasp. The very day of his arrival at the Hague after their assassination, he represented to the Commissioners of the States of Holland that if he might advise the magistrates of the town, he should recommend them to resign, adding, however, that he had no doubt of their innocence. At the same time he arrogated to himself an authority with which he had not been invested, by confirming the election of the new magistrates of Rotterdam, whom the rioters had already placed in possession.

Three days later the States of Holland, anxious to close their session, and fearing that their absence would leave their councillor deputies powerless, gave the Prince of Orange the right to change at his pleasure the magistrates of the towns, by whom they themselves were elected, thus accomplishing the great sacrifice demanded of them. They only sought to mitigate it by limiting so tremendous a power in the hands of their Stadtholder to 'this once, without binding themselves in the future.' This resolution, made after a debate prolonged through two sittings, empowered him to ask, and in case of need to insist upon, the resignation of any magistrates whose removal seemed to him advantageous to the public welfare. The latter were to be relieved of their functions with the understanding that their removal in no way injured their good name, and only placed their persons and property under the Prince's protection. To avoid the appearance of thus violating the

sovereign prerogatives of the town councils, they were allowed, during a week's delay, the imaginary right of signifying their refusal to consent to a dispossession to which they were obliged to submit. When once they had consented to this abdication, the States of Holland completed their subjection by leaving to the Prince of Orange the free disposal of all vacant military posts below the rank of colonel, so that with the exception of the higher commands, of which the States-General were not deprived, he was thus recognised as the sole head of the army. 'Very soon,' writes Bernard to Louvois, 'the whole government will belong to him, and he will have more power than his ancestors ever had.'

William III. found a most useful ally in John de Witt's successor, Gaspard Fagel. Assisted by his brother, Henry Fagel, who replaced him as Secretary to the States-General, the new Grand Pensionary of Holland placed all his authority at the service of the Prince of Orange, and had no other ambition than that of pleasing him by the services he rendered to him. It was Fagel's unjust appeals and insinuating speeches that obtained from the States of the Provinces those last concessions which so amply satisfied William III.'s claims and demands.

Not only in Holland, but in Zealand also, the Prince of Orange summoned new magistrates to the municipal assemblies, either to appease violent passions or to content the lowest ambitions, 'at the risk,' writes De Groot, 'of seeing the town councils governed by the mob.' Most of those whose talents or whose services should have marked them out for public recognition, amongst others Vivien, Beverningh, Henry Hooft the courageous burgomaster of Amsterdam, and later Van Beuningen himself, sacrificed to ingratitude, had to wait in retirement, more or less prolonged, for the termination of their disgrace. The new Stadtholder's courtiers, such as Valkenier of Amsterdam, or former conspirators like Kievit of Rotterdam who had been convicted of treason during the last war but one with England, and reinstated by the Prince's order, were called to fill the office of pensionaries in the principal towns. Formerly masters of the government of the republic, the

States of Holland found themselves henceforth in a state of dependence from which they could not free themselves, and their power seemed to disappear with the great minister who had prolonged for their benefit the interregnum of the House of Orange.

It was for William III. henceforth to justify the revolution which restored to him the inheritance of his ancestors, by accomplishing the work of deliverance for which he had been elected by a whole nation threatened with conquest. He devoted his life to this noble task, though powerless at first to give his country either victory or peace, but he did not allow himself to be discouraged by the failure of his first attempts. When, at the end of the year, instead of maintaining a defensive war he attempted to force the French army to abandon its conquests by attacking it in the Netherlands, he very nearly left the enemy master of Holland.

Short as the country was of troops, the frosts of winter would have given her over to the invaders but for a sudden thaw which hastened the retreat of the Duke of Luxembourg and nearly turned it into a rout. The Prince of Orange had to wait another year before his military manœuvres and diplomatic negotiations had restored to the republic the three provinces of which the invasion had deprived her. By thus braving misfortune, William III. paved the way to the great destiny which awaited him. Sixteen years later the King of England's successor James II., having married his daughter to the Prince of Orange, was to be ousted from his throne by his son-in-law, to whom the English appealed to break the alliance between the Stuarts and France.

This revolution opposed to Louis XIV. the henceforth indissoluble union between Holland and England which, by giving the signal for a European coalition, brought upon France, invaded in her turn, the sad end of a great reign. The retaliation for the war so unjustly declared against the United Provinces was long in coming, but it was dearly bought by those who had provoked it. It was the Prince of Orange who profited by it. Not only did it bring about the re-establishment of the Stadtholdership in his favour, and subsequently his

elevation to the throne of Great Britain, but he gained, with the possession of a kingdom, the glory of playing a great part as the liberator of his country and the defender of the independence of Europe. As to the republic of the United Provinces, William III.'s greatness was her loss. She found herself involved in the obstinate struggle in which he engaged with Louis XIV. to check the power of the great King. Even when freed from invasion she had no further repose; and to the end of the century, and even beyond it, the peace which was so essential to her was only restored by truces. All her interests were sacrificed to a continuation of the continental war, she lost her dominion over the seas, the prosperity of her finance and commerce was irreparably injured, and she found herself condemned to play a part which being beyond her strength must in the end exhaust her. She could no longer hold her own.

Her political freedom, though only temporarily eclipsed, had a long trial of thirty years to pass through. In fact, whilst the States-General recognised the office of captain- and admiral-general as hereditary to the Prince of Orange and his descendants, the States of Holland and Zealand, taking the initiative, declared their Stadtholder's power to be hereditary. Their example, to which the States of Utrecht hastened to conform, was followed by the provinces of Guelders and Overyssel as soon as, once freed from the French invasion, they were restored to the Confederation. The provinces of Friesland and Groningen, still governed by the young Prince of Nassau, Henry Casimir, who was destined to be the ancestor of the dynasty now reigning in the Netherlands, alone remained in possession of their former privileges during the minority of their Stadtholder, but testified the most humble deference for all William III.'s wishes. 'The Majesty of Orange was offended,' wrote a great lawyer some years afterwards, 'at the mere idea of the State having any impulse but what he was pleased to give it.'

In making the Grand Pensionary de Witt a scapegoat for her disasters, the republic of the United Provinces deprived themselves of a great minister who, instead of making her

dependent, only desired to serve her. Reduced to the last extremity, she found in William III. a liberator but also a master, who by imposing upon her the authority of a sovereign made her, in a measure, pay a ransom for her freedom.

The supreme powers of the States-General and the States of the Provinces, especially those of Holland, however, still existed, if only nominally. The United Provinces remained a republic in spite of the ratification of the inheritance of the offices in favour of the Prince of Orange, and when, some years later, the States of Guelders offered him the sovereignty of their province, he was almost forced to refuse it in spite of his secret vexation. Political freedom had taken such firm root during the vacancy of the Stadtholdership, that it maintained its hold even upon those who would have wished to put it down. When dying, moreover, without leaving an heir to replace him, William III. restored to the United Provinces their freedom of government, of which they eagerly availed themselves.

For forty-five years they were well governed by eminent statesmen: the Grand Pensionaries Hensius and Slingelandt, worthy successors of John de Witt.

The course of the happy destinies of the republic was not interrupted when in the middle of the eighteenth century she found she could no longer dispense with a military leader to shield her from the complications into which she had been drawn by her close alliance with England. The new restoration of the House of Orange in favour of the Stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, William IV., representing the junior branch of the House of Nassau, cost the United Provinces no sacrifice. The wise government of that prince and the minority of his successor left intact the privileges which assured their internal independence. Later—when given up to renewed civil discord and subdued by conquest, and again when, at the beginning of the century, subjected in turns to a foreign monarch or united to France—they rose triumphant over these trials, holding to their ancient traditions with determined constancy, and thus found in the Stadtholdership a precursor to a constitutional monarchy which they have had the wisdom and the happiness to preserve.

The ineffaceable traces left by the long ministry of John de Witt were useful in keeping up the fidelity of this attachment to tutelary institutions. The power which he had exercised for twenty years bore without detriment the supreme test by which a good government is recognised, which even after downfall seems to live again in the benefits it confers. Before the United Provinces, threatened with the loss of their independence, had appealed to the Prince of Orange to save them, the Grand Pensionary of Holland had placed them out of the reach of the usurpations of a despotic power by accustoming them to rule themselves.

Freed from foreign dominion by William III., who followed the glorious example of his ancestors, they were preserved by John de Witt from internal subjection. He contributed also to insure them the enjoyment of a free government, perpetuated after him in a race of patriotic and popular princes. His work did not, therefore, altogether perish with him, but, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, has survived him.

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